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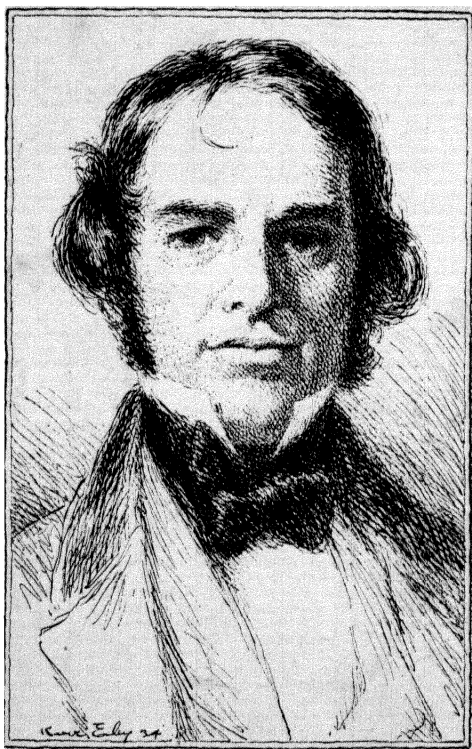
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*Pen drawing by Kerr Eby, after
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HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

REPRESENTATIVE SELECTIONS, WITH
INTRODUCTION, BIBLIOGRAPHY, AND NOTES

BY

ODELL SHEPARD

*James J. Goodwin Professor of English
Trinity College*



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SHEPARD'S LONGFELLOW

W. P. I.

MADE IN U. S. A.

PREFACE

In the preparation of this volume my effort has been threefold: first of all, to present Longfellow as he was, without excessive regard to the rise and fall of his fame or to the more superficial changes in literary fashion that have affected his reputation; secondly, to show his "representative value" as an American product of the nineteenth century; lastly, to indicate his influence in the shaping of the American mind. The selections have been chosen with this threefold purpose in view. I hope that all of Longfellow's best work in verse is presented here. In addition, I have included certain poems that are interesting chiefly for their historical significance, and also a few that are too deeply embedded in the national memory to be left out for merely æsthetic reasons.

Excepting the early translation, *Coplas de Manrique*, the poems are here arranged in the order in which they were published. The last four poems in the book are reprinted by special arrangement with the Houghton Mifflin Company, who still hold the copyright upon them.

I wish to thank my wife for her assistance in the preparation of the manuscript, and I am gratefully indebted to Professor Harry H. Clark, general editor of this series, for many helpful suggestions.

ODELL SHEPARD

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INTRODUCTION

Setting out to criticize Longfellow, as Mr. Bliss Perry has wittily said, is "like carrying a rifle into a national park." One undertakes it with the hesitancy that a man would feel in making a purely æsthetic study of the Stars and Stripes. For this poet, whatever else may be said of him, has long been an American institution. His poems, whether good or bad, are woven in among our heartstrings, so that the effort to see them as they really are involves the strain of self-analysis and adverse criticism of them seems to tear at our very roots.

Longfellow is one of the few writers of the past, moreover, whom a sensitive critic feels constrained to treat as though they were still with us to suffer and enjoy. Himself rather a gentleman than a man of letters, he still conveys to us the same grave courtesy that was evident in his daily walk, always asking for a return in kind. Few critics had the hardihood to tell him during his lifetime that his work was often weak, and those who did see and say this he forgave with a magnanimous good nature that missed the point entirely. Indeed it is doubtful whether he ever quite understood what criticism aims at or is good for. Appreciation he understood and practiced, but stern effort to "see the thing as in itself it really is" was not in keeping with his mood or with his time. If Longfellow were in fact still with us he might say that his poems were a pure gift to America, and that there is something questionable in a close estimate of their intrinsic worth. He might also point out that this gift was long ago accepted, so that our question whether it is acceptable comes late in the day. He might even suggest that we leave his poems to take their chance, as they have successfully done for almost a hundred years, among those for whom they were intended.

Our answer is clear, sufficient, and soon made: Longfellow's work is of utmost value to America in her effort to see what she has been and what, therefore, she is and is to be. In studying him we study ourselves. It is true that he has little to say about the America of his time, and that his remarks about the America of any time are seldom acute; yet in the total temper of his mind he represents us, without fully intending it, more truly than other poets do who intend little else. Considering this, and also the range and depth of his influence upon us, it is clear that no view of American culture which leaves him out or treats him with contempt can be either sound or complete. Those who think him a great poet may be naïve, but those who think him unworthy of careful consideration are something worse than that.

Few more searching questions can be proposed to the contemporary American critic than "What do you think of Longfellow?" This question has been postponed for several insufficient reasons, and perhaps most of all because of its difficulty. It is easy to adopt the pious attitude of those who regard him as a national hero, sacrosanct, or who remember only the pleasure that they took in his poems before they knew what poetry is; and it is apparently easier still just now to sink into the contemptuous attitude of those who regard him as hopelessly Victorian, bourgeois, homiletic, decent, and clear. To see him and present him without partiality, to read his writings somewhat as they were read by his contemporaries and also with the perspective of a century of time, is not an easy task. It is, however, a task of first-rate importance. One who does this has helped to re-establish the continuity of American thought and feeling. He has performed a patriotic as well as a literary service.

Our present concern with Longfellow, although it involves other considerations, is primarily that of literary criticism. As such, it may be expressed, in Carlyle's paraphrase of Goethe,

as an effort to make plain to ourselves "what the poet's aim really and truly was, how the task he had to do stood before his eyes, and how far, with such materials as were afforded him, he has fulfilled it." To this we need only add that the aim itself must be estimated and criticized; for it is clearly not enough to say of a marksman that he has hit his target: the question still lies open whether he should have shot at such a mark.

I. ENVIRONMENT

Before we can make clear to ourselves the task of any artist or thinker we must know something about his environment and about the mental weather prevailing in his time. Longfellow was fortunate in many ways, but in nothing more than in the persons, places, events, and ideas by which he was surrounded and supported. Born in 1807, and thus the same age as Whittier, he was four years younger than Emerson, three years younger than Hawthorne, two years older than Holmes, ten years older than Thoreau, and twelve years the elder of Lowell and Herman Melville. All of these men he knew and most of them he frequently saw, so that he had not to endure that intellectual isolation which has thwarted or stifled so many American minds and which is painfully evident in the career of Poe. The Boston of his time contained a society as eager in thought and as earnest in spiritual and æsthetic aspiration as any then existing in the world. His Cambridge was a pleasant village, quiet but not remote, dominated by America's oldest, most liberal, and most influential college.

The full story of Longfellow's good fortune would include some notice of his honorable ancestry, deeply rooted in New England, going back on his mother's side to no less than four of the Plymouth Pilgrims. In this there was ground for a quiet pride, and also for a feeling, duly modified by democracy, that *noblesse oblige*. At the Wadsworth-Longfellow house in

Portland one comes even closer to the poet who spent there the years of his earnest boyhood than in the more familiar Craigie House in Cambridge, where he lived for more than half his life. Although by no means so luxurious as the other, it also is a "gentleman's mansion" according to the fine though simple standards of the eighteenth century in which it was built; but first of all it is a "home," in the special sense borne by that word in America a hundred years ago. One sees there abundant evidence, in the old tools and furniture and books and household appliances, that the life of the family it once held was quiet, dignified, restrained, yet comfortable, and surrounded by social respect. One sees that Longfellow began life with a sense of family prestige to be maintained, and the manuscripts and drawings of his earliest years—neat, clear, painstaking, and quite unprecocious—show how he went at once to work.

Longfellow's father, Stephen, was a Harvard graduate, a successful lawyer, and a man of prime note in his community. It is evident that his personality was stronger than that of his son, upon whose mind and character he left an indelible impress. Somewhat remarkable in his time and place for the liberality of his opinions, he had the strong practical bent of the Yankee, always demanding tangible results for every effort and giving at least due weight to public opinion. The young Longfellow seems to have taken his interest in poetry not from him but from his mother, with whom he first discussed, in rather stilted undergraduate letters, such topics as the verse of Thomas Gray. Like John Ruskin, Longfellow was filial almost to a fault. He never outgrew the diverse influences exerted upon him by his father and his mother, and he seems never to have reconciled them. These interweaving strands are traceable throughout his career—the mother's more delicate nature leading to what he calls "daydreaming" and his father's insistence upon practical usefulness inclining him toward the didactic style and disturbing his satisfaction in self-culture and the

intellectual life. Even in his boyhood, therefore, he unconsciously absorbed the opinion, which nothing in the American life of his day was likely to correct, that artistic creation for its own sake is a rather effeminate self-indulgence, to be justified, if at all, only by its contribution to moral or social welfare.

The Portland of Longfellow's youth was still recognizably Puritan. It had no theater until he was twenty-three years old, and even that was soon converted into a church. Amusements were few and simple, but dancing was not discountenanced and there was no prejudice against the temperate use of wine. Boston, the capital city—for Maine was not separated from Massachusetts until 1820—was distant a journey of two days by accommodation stage, and that journey was seldom taken. The prosperity of the town as a port, which had been considerable toward the end of the eighteenth century and had declined during the years of the Embargo Act, was revived after the War of 1812. Trade in lumber and fish, molasses and rum, filled the beautiful harbor with sails and brought to the wharves strange cargoes and men from distant corners of the world. Shipbuilding was an important industry. Agriculture, logging, and sea-borne commerce came together in the streets of the town, linking the land to the sea and luring a boy's thoughts beyond the horizon. Near at hand was the forest, no longer primeval but still wild, and in the forest were some remnants of the aborigines.

How remote and drowsy the Portland of Longfellow's boyhood must have been, in spite of the bustle at her wharves, we can vaguely guess from his poem, "My Lost Youth," but we can scarcely allow enough for the differences in pace and complexity that have been brought about in American life as a whole between his time and ours. His America was a country of homes rather than of hotels and apartment houses. People went about in it on foot or in horse-drawn vehicles. It contained comparatively little machinery. It was a land in which the

paternal will was law, in which women were too much engaged with their duties to think much about their rights, in which the basic principles of middle-class morality and propriety had never been seriously questioned. Among the communities of the eastern seaboard there was little violent crime. In New England there was no extreme poverty, and, excepting a few fortunes of Boston and Salem, no great concentration of wealth. For almost two centuries immigration from Europe had been negligible, so that the descendants of the original settlers had become homogeneous and self-assured. That passionate concern with matters of eternal welfare which had made spiritually heroic the lives of many of their forefathers had cooled and hardened, in many instances, into mere respectability, estimated as much by the avoidance of social error as by positive standards of rectitude. In the smaller towns of New England, such as those in which Longfellow spent nearly all his life, public opinion was powerful if not tyrannous. It tolerated eccentricities of dress and behavior and even opinion which in our day would be killed by derision, but for violations of the moral code it had no mercy.

Except by a miracle, imaginative literature could not spring from such a society, and it is therefore perhaps the chief instance of Longfellow's good fortune that the span of his life coincided almost exactly with the rise, culmination, and decline of a remarkable intellectual movement in New England. This movement is often attributed to the liberation of energy which followed upon the decline of Calvinism; but in order to get precise meaning from such a generalization one needs to know how this energy was given direction and into what channels it flowed. Briefly speaking, it was directed in part by a cluster of ideas, ultimately Platonic, which came to America, at first, by way of France and England, out of the Romantic School of German philosophy; in part by a humanitarian enthusiasm which had begun long before in Europe; and in part also by the industrial

and economic situation of the country. It flowed first, and most obviously, into the channels of Unitarianism and Transcendentalism, from which it spread into the arts, into such activities as the anti-slavery campaign, and then into the numerous fads and foibles suggested by Lowell in his essay on Thoreau.

The causes and results of this intellectual movement in the midst of which Longfellow lived are at present less important, however, than the fact that it occurred, concerning which there is no doubt. Emerson admitted in his *Journals* for 1852¹ that the earlier history of Massachusetts had not spread an exhilarating landscape before the "expansive thinker." Speaking of the period during which the Calvinism of Jonathan Edwards still held at least rural New England as in a vise, he says that "from 1790 to 1820 there was not a book, a speech, a conversation, or a thought in the State. About 1820, however, the Channing, Webster, and Everett era began, and we have been bookish and political and cogitative since."

It is characteristic of Emerson that he should name three minds as the sources of this era, and, except that his own name ought to stand in the place of Webster's, he could scarcely have chosen better. Even such an idealistic philosopher as he should not have ignored, however, such events as were then occurring in the outer world—events calculated to startle into thought even the most somnolent community. As a boy in Portland, Longfellow heard the guns of the War of 1812. In his young manhood he saw the slow change which converted New England, once primarily agricultural, into a land of machines and factories, beset by the many new and pressing problems which these entailed. He saw the coming of the railroad, which destroyed forever the old self-enclosed village life he loved and made New England, once almost a separate land, only a small part of an immense continent. He saw the clipper ship add a final chapter to the romance of American navigation

¹ *Journals*, Centenary Edition, vol. for 1845-1855, p. 339.

before it succumbed to metal and steam. He saw in Boston the rise of a new middle class, less aristocratic than the "merchants" who went before them and more cultivated than the "business men" who were to come after—a class of men not wholly disdainful of ideas, who won for their region a greater comparative wealth than it has since enjoyed, and used their power with some realization of social responsibility. He lived through the years of our ill-famed Mexican War, through the Webster-Hayne debates and the excitement of the Missouri Compromise, through the demoralizing fury of the Gold Rush, through the bitter discussions of John Brown's Raid, through the Civil War, the assassination of Lincoln, and the shameful atrocities of the Carpetbaggers. When he was young the Unitarian Movement raised questions which to millions of Americans seemed to involve spiritual life and death; during his middle years the impact of Darwinian theories upon religious tenets was painfully felt by millions more; in his old age the corruption of American business and political life was apparent to all who had eyes to see and courage to use them.

Such was the environment of outer events in which Longfellow lived, and it is one of the more significant things to be said of him that, excepting the splendid peroration in "The Building of the Ship" and the rather perfunctory *Poems of Slavery*, written at the earnest request of his friend Charles Sumner, he said about them all, as a poet, strangely little. That he was aware of them we know from the jottings, usually rather cold and colorless, in his Journal, but that he did not imaginatively absorb and transmute them in artistic forms is evident to the reader of his poems. To say this is, of course, no condemnation, for there is no binding reason why any poet, as such, should concern himself with contemporary affairs and events. Only this may be affirmed, that when a given poet does not so concern himself the fact must be given due weight in every effort to understand him.

II. OPINIONS

So uncommunicative is Longfellow about most of what went to make his epoch a stirring and stimulating time that it is by no means easy to come at his political, religious, economic, and social opinions. These are not to be studied, like those of such a self-expressive writer as Lowell, in the overt statement of public speeches, lectures, essays, and poems of occasion. They are to be inferred, with all possible caution, from Longfellow's laconic Journal, from his rather shallow prose fiction, from private letters, and from poems written with habitual reticence. Something is to be gleaned from what others said of him, and something from his total effect upon his times. In this way, laboriously, but with a certain confidence in the result, we may piece together the fabric and pattern of his thought.

Longfellow was at first a Federalist in politics, as his father—a member of the Hartford Convention—had been before him. During the struggle with the South he became, as a matter of course, a Republican. Political questions, except as they were reflected and echoed to him by the career of his friend Charles Sumner, interested him—in so far as his published writings indicate—less than they did such writers as Whittier and Lowell, and even less than they did Hawthorne, Emerson, and Thoreau. He always voted, as he went to church, at least in part as a matter of public duty, but he had little active share in the town affairs of Cambridge at a time when more might have been expected of him. It was said in Cambridge that “people always knew on which side Mr. Longfellow stood,” yet he never made a public speech worthy of the name. No doubt this was due in part to his retiring disposition and to his lack of oratorical ability, but it is probable that he regarded participation in the strife of parties—always excepting the brilliant speeches of Sumner—as beneath the dignity of a scholar and a gentleman. Thus, on the fourteenth of May, 1851, he writes in his Journal:

"Went to hear Emerson on the Fugitive Slave Law at the Cambridge City Hall. Some noise and shoutings and hurrahs for everybody in general. The first part of the address was grand; so was the close. The treatment of Webster I did not like so well. It is rather painful to see Emerson in the arena of politics, hissed and hooted at by young law-students." One reflects that it may have been "rather painful" to Emerson to stand there, and to be making public condemnation of the statesman who had been the idol of his younger years, but it is evident that the iniquity of the Fugitive Slave Law was to him more painful still. In justice to Longfellow it must be said that he too felt this law with pain when he saw its evil work almost at his door in the famous case of Anthony Burns;² but in general there remained to the end of his life a touch of the parochial in his social and political thought, as though he never quite outgrew the limitations of the New England town meeting. His keen imaginative participation in the career of Sumner saved him, however, from narrowness of political outlook.³

Like that of Robert Browning, Longfellow's religious faith was simple, unquestioning, and apparently sufficient to all his needs. It seems never to have been deepened by doubt or strengthened by struggle. As he took his politics, so it would appear that he took his religion, from his father, who had been a classmate of William Ellery Channing, the protagonist of American Unitarianism, and who was mainly responsible for drawing his church at Portland into the new theological current.

² See *Journals* for May 26 to June 2, 1854.

³ Most of Longfellow's allusions to political matters are found not in his poems but in the *Journal*. See, e.g., the entries for October 25, 1838; October 30, 1838; May 27, 1846; March 19, 1848; November 4, 1849; November 12, 1849; March 9, 1850; November 10, 1850; December 8, 1850; February 15, 1851; April 4 to 12, 1851; April 25, 1851; May 26, 1854; October 7, 1860; November 10, 1864; November 4, 1870. See also the letters of December 11, 1823; February 26, 1827; August 6, 1838; February 9, 1839; June 27, 1841; January 4, 1843; September, n.d., 1844; May 19, 1850; January 15, 1851; February 21, 1854; May 24, 1856; October 30, 1856; February 10, 1865.

For those, such as Emerson, who had to do mental battle for Unitarianism, first in their own minds and then in the world, it was a source of discipline as well as of liberation, but it had less to offer those who took it by an effortless inheritance. With Longfellow it worked out into the mild latitudinarianism depicted in the clergyman who serves as hero of *Kavanagh*:

"The study in the tower was delightful. There sat the young apostle and meditated the great design and purpose of his life: the removal of all prejudice and uncharitableness and persecution, and the union of all sects into one church universal. Sects themselves he would not destroy, but sectarianism; for sects were to him only as separate converging roads leading all to the same celestial city of peace. . . . In affairs ecclesiastical he had not suggested many changes. One that he had much at heart was that the partition wall between parish and church should be quietly taken down, so that all should sit together at the Supper of the Lord. He also desired that the organist should relinquish the old and pernicious habit of preluding with triumphal marches, and running his fingers at random over the keys of his instrument, playing scraps of secular music very slowly to make them sacred, and substitute some of the beautiful symphonies of Pergolesi, Palestrina, and Sebastian Bach."⁴

The heroic age of the New England pulpit, in which the clergyman had been often a bigot but was usually a scholar and a mighty controversialist, was definitely over when this effeminate portrait was painted. Theological and philosophical debate no longer toughened the minds of New England farmers, and Longfellow himself, in his novel *Hyperion*,⁵ expresses his attitude toward such debate in the remark that it "leads to no important result." Men of the earlier time had thought that it might lead to the result of saving one's soul, and for a deeper mind than Longfellow's it might still have been the very stuff

⁴ *Kavanagh*, chap. XIX.

⁵ Book II, chap. VI.

of the intellectual life; but his tendency was to believe that all souls are saved already, and that our chief business in life is to "act,—act in the living present." What was needed to this end seemed to be a restful and optimistic religion that would not set Christians against each other but would leave them free for activity in the world that now is. For the rest, Longfellow attended church regularly, listened to the sermon with interest, and often mentioned it in his Journal for the day—usually estimating it as a rhetorical exercise.

In every attempt to estimate the depth and nature of Longfellow's religious experience, it is well to bear in mind a certain quiet but revealing sentence of his in which he reminds us even more than ordinarily of Thomas Gray. Writing to his sisters from Italy on September 1, 1828, he says: "With me all deep impressions are silent ones." The remark holds good against every test. He wrote, for example, no personal love poetry. Concerning the deepest emotional experience he ever had, the loss of his second wife, he was completely silent for many years. We may even credibly explain the absence of passion in his poetry by referring to that New Englander's reserve in him which made it impossible for him ever to "speak out." And so it seems best to say of his religious thought and feeling that, although they found little overt utterance, and although they certainly included little of a mystical nature, yet they were sufficient to sustain and console him through all the years of a singularly blameless life.⁶

⁶Longfellow's attitude toward the church and religion may be studied in *Hyperion* II, 6; *Kavanagh*, chapters 18, 19, 25, and *Journal* for July 24, 1836; August 13, 1836; September 17, 1836; September 25, 1836; July 26, 1838; August 19, 1838; October 28, 1838; March 12, 1846; August 2, 1846; August 16, 1846; November 15, 1846; November 19, 1846; July 31, 1847; September 18, 1847; October 31, 1847; June 17, 1848; July 9, 1848; January 7, 1849; December 23, 1849; July 14, 1851; January 26, 1852; October 13, 1852. See also letters of December 18, 1824; June 28, 1828. One of Longfellow's most extended utterances on religious topics is to be seen in the Preface to his Inaugural Address at Bowdoin College, given in Samuel Longfellow's *Life*, under the date 1830.

During Longfellow's years at school and college the New England about him was turning from agriculture to industrial work. A more penetrating imagination and a larger grasp of contemporary fact than he possessed were needed to foresee what this would lead to. He saw little more, apparently, than that one kind of crudity was giving place to another, even cruder because it had no tradition behind it. By the year 1840 the great mills at Lowell, which had long employed only native workers—and they from homes of some refinement—began filling up with foreigners; but Longfellow, although he lived near at hand and was a son-in-law of one of the owners, did not see the portent. He continued throughout his life to write, if not quite to think, as though the country about him were still, and would always remain, homogeneous in population, easily prosperous, untroubled by the problems that vexed less fortunate lands. He, at any rate, was untroubled by the economic problem. He never knew in his own experience, and he never had to fear, anything approaching poverty. After his second marriage he lived in what was then considered affluence, never writing for money, always making it without much effort, and always managing it well.

"If Socrates were here," Emerson once remarked to his Journal, "we could go and talk with him; but Longfellow we cannot go and talk with; there is a palace, and servants, and a row of bottles of different colored wines, and wine glasses, and fine coats."⁷ Such was the impression made upon the sage of Concord by the prosperous gentleman who had married, eleven years before, the daughter of Nathan Appleton, one of the wealthier Boston merchants. By this marriage Longfellow became owner of Craigie House, once the headquarters of George Washington and still the finest residence in Cambridge. No one ever begrudged him the affluence which he adorned and which seemed, indeed, to provide just the appropriate

⁷*Journals*, Centenary Edition, vol. for 1849-1855, p. 397.

setting for his temperament; and yet there were a few who wondered whether his wealth and ease were good for him as an American poet. Walt Whitman wondered when he wrote: "Longfellow, reminiscent, polish'd, elegant, with the air of finest conventional library, picture-gallery or parlor, with ladies and gentlemen in them, and plush and rosewood, and ground-glass lamps, and mahogany and ebony furniture, and a silver inkstand and scented paper to write on."⁸ From the point of view of Camden, as from that of Concord, Craigie House, it is clear, looked a little undemocratic and even a little foreign. Without any ostentation—except possibly in the rather brilliant attire which he affected in earlier life—Longfellow sometimes gave the impression that he held himself aloof. The fact is that he did love comfort and even luxury. He loved to be surrounded by things beautiful and dignified. His private library, toward the end of his life, was considered one of the richest in America. After retiring from his professorship at Harvard he lived for many years the life of a gentleman of leisure, which was extremely rare in the New England of his time. Also it seems likely that he felt a definite preference, never straightforwardly expressed, for the simpler aristocratic arrangement of society. While a boy in Portland he often visited the estate of seven thousand acres granted to his grandfather Wadsworth for services in the Revolutionary War. The old General himself, sitting in his large house by the Great Falls of the Saco, always dressed in the tie-wig, knee-breeches, and buckled shoes of the eighteenth-century gentleman, was a vivid example of semi-patriarchal life, of established dignity and assured position, which was not lost upon his grandson. On the whole it seems likely that if Longfellow himself had lived through the years of the Revolution he would have allied himself with the Tories. Had he lived in England, he would have tried to found a house, like Sir Walter Scott. And yet he was in fact, allowing for his

⁸In "Old Poets," from *Good-Bye My Fancy*.

natural shyness, entirely affable and unassuming. He had in him the root of democracy: he valued men solely for what they were.

Without remarkable gifts in conversation or social encounter, Longfellow managed easily to gain the acquaintance and friendship of many remarkable and famous persons. When he visited London it was natural that he should be the guest of Dickens, and when Thackeray came to Boston it was equally natural that he should inquire first for Longfellow. With an exceptional talent for making and holding friends, the poet gathered about him such men as Cornelius Felton, whom Dickens called "the heartiest of Greek Professors," Louis Agassiz, a pioneer of exact scientific research in America, George Hillard, a brilliant man of wide erudition, and Charles Sumner, one of the foremost antagonists of slavery. Few writers have ever had a more intelligent private audience than this, to which many of Longfellow's poems were first submitted. While working on his translation of Dante he had the support and assistance of Charles Eliot Norton and of James Russell Lowell, perhaps the two most serviceable minds in America for that particular need. He was supported, in fact, by Cambridge, by Boston, by the ever-increasing host of his affectionate admirers throughout America and in foreign lands. Wherever he went he was known. Whatever he wrote was read. Thus he gathered the substantial rewards of one who succeeds in saying what all have thought and in singing what all have felt. His was the strength and happiness of one who knows that whatever he makes is wanted, is cherished, is loved. The quiet and simple assurance of his later style was made possible by his realization of this support.

That Longfellow should think well of the society which thought so well of him was natural, and, considering his uncritical temper, inevitable. The unexacting social scheme which he saw about him in the New England town, always providing an easy eminence for his family and for himself,

allowing freedom where it could do no harm but compelling conformity in serious matters, distributing honor where honor was due—all this looked to him, as indeed it was, almost entirely admirable. The doubts that sometimes visited his friend Emerson never occurred to him, and if he had ever glanced into that strange acrid book called *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*, written by Emerson's "hired man," he would scarcely have thought that its carping criticism of society showed proper faith in God or in God's chosen country. The physical privations and the solitude so eagerly embraced by Thoreau were repugnant to his nature. There was nothing in Longfellow of the recluse, although he makes some play in his fiction with the romantic accessories of literary retirement. Apparently he had no conception what a mind such as Thoreau's would do with itself in complete seclusion. Longfellow was a good though a quiet companion, a genial host, a diner-out, and ever during the years when he wrote the most frequent complaints about the little free time that was left by his college work he was often to be seen at the balls and parties, and especially at the musical concerts, of Boston.

III. LIMITATIONS

From whatever angle we consider Longfellow's relation to his environment, which has now been briefly indicated in its political, religious, economic, and social aspects, we find that his grasp of contemporary fact was weak and incomprehensive. Between him and the actual American scene there intervened an Indian-summer haze, dreamily dim, which blurred and softened every hue and line and angle, hiding the coarse and the familiar, substituting the colors of the heart's desire. This haze it is that we see in his writings, and not the crude reality behind it. Machinery, science, labor disputes, social unrest, the roar of industry and the din of war, all the strife and toil and

anxious mental questing up and down which must be forever associated with his century, make little stir in his still pages. While America shouted and surged and agonized and was all but torn asunder, he sat by the fireside writing verse on his knee with his eyes closed, now and then striding to the window to look down the vista of rustling elms to where the River Charles was "writing the last letter of his name."

Whether a fault or not, this is a major trait of Longfellow's, that he does not bring the force of his mind to bear upon things near at hand. His thoughts and loves are elsewhere. Self-indulgently romantic, he uses imagination rather for escape from reality than for penetration of it. And even when concerned with things remote, his thought tends to dally with superficial hues and contours and seldom pierces to essences. This we feel in reading his several attempts at dramatic writing such as the inanimate *New England Tragedies*, and even more in his prose fiction. The stage is set for action, but no actors that draw the breath of life appear upon it. In an early story called "The Baptism of Fire," published in *Outre-Mer*, he writes a cool description of an execution by fire and hanging which gives, at first, the effect of a callous brutality. One soon realizes, of course, that the writer is half asleep, that he has failed to bring the terrible experience home to himself as a thing that once actually happened—as a thing the like of which was happening in his own country in his time as in ours. Had he keenly realized this, either he would not have written the story at all or else he would have written it with an anguish of mind that would have made it live. But it remained for him, as it does for us, merely something in a book, distant in time and place, a faintly lurid spot in the light and shade of history.

The haze that dimmed and all but hid Longfellow's America from his eyes was composed, so to speak, of time. That is, he looked at the present through the past—through an illusory and highly romantic past, to be sure, of his own dreaming.

What he saw in America was chiefly the enduring of the old rather than the emergence of the new. In fancy and imagination he was at least as antiquarian as Washington Irving, whose writings he admired as a boy, imitated as a young man, and never quite outgrew. Like Hawthorne, whose fancy clothed with mosses a house not seventy years old when he went to live in it, Longfellow had a deep delight in all things established and timeworn—a delight all the stronger because the America about him had so few of such things. What Tennyson called “the passion of the past” was stronger in him than it was in Tennyson, and it was indeed his closest approach to a true poetic passion. The crude and inchoate America of his time offered little to his love of the rounded and finished and mature. He had not Walt Whitman’s pleasure in mere becoming. Therefore when he dealt with American themes he preferred those provided by “the old Colony days,” and he turned habitually to Europe because there he found things old.

Longfellow’s love of his homeland never waned, to be sure, during his years abroad. It is true that during his first visit to Europe he planned a volume of Sketches and Tales of New England,⁹ but then it is also true that he never wrote this volume. He declared after seeing the Rhine that it was “not so fine as the Hudson,”¹⁰ but at that time he had not seen the American river and he cared little to see it in later years. His true feeling seems to be uttered in the Journal entry for June 4, 1846: “In truth it must be spoken and recorded—this is a dreadful country for a poet to live in. Lethal, deadly influences hang over him, the very ‘Deadly Nightshade’ of song. Many poets’ souls there are here, and many lovers of song; but life and its ways and ends are prosaic in this country to the last degree.”¹¹

⁹ See *Life*, ed. 1886, vol. I., p. 165.

¹⁰ Letter of May 15, 1829.

¹¹ This passage was first given in full by J. T. Hatfield in *New Light on Longfellow*, p. 111. For further hints of Longfellow’s feeling for America, see the letters of August 17, 1826 and January 2, 1840. See also the *Journal* for November 14, 1845; November 23, 1846; January 6, 1847; January 16, 1847; October 25, 1854.

To most Americans of Longfellow's time Europe was no longer the near and familiar fact that it had been to Franklin and Jefferson and that it is again to us, but a land of the misty past and of curious legends and superstitions, a played-out land, interesting to read about and, if one had the time and the money, even to visit, but scarcely a land from which Americans might hope to learn much of practical importance. Longfellow had ample opportunity to correct this opinion at least in his own mind, for he spent almost six years of his life abroad. Instead, he added his own great influence to that already exerted by Irving and later carried on by Bayard Taylor, in building up this popular misconception. He had his share, for example, in shaping that dream of a Germany quaint and impractical and utterly *gemütlich* from which most of America did not awake until 1917. He turned away from modern Germany as he did from modern America, drowsing in Nuremberg and Heidelberg, looking mournfully into a past that came not back again. The modern universities of Germany might have made him a better scholar—less widely appreciative, perhaps, but more exact and judicious—but also they would have distressed him, as Paris and London and even New York did, by interrupting his dream of a romantic past. He preferred the dying city of Bruges, and Madrid and Seville and Florence as those cities were in his youth, because there all change seemed to be over and the figures of the past were as quiet as those in a tapestry. To this there is perhaps no serious objection except that Longfellow's passion for the past was not after all very passionate, that it did not go far enough, and that it failed to bring antiquity down to date. He did not have that more intense historical imagination by which one sees the past as a living and a present thing. It was to him rather an asylum for escape, a museum of pictures and statues, a dreamy vista for a self-indulgent fancy, or at best a shadowy cathedral like that described in the first of his sonnets on the *Divina Commedia*, wherein

Far off the noises of the world retreat;
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar.

Thus it will be seen that Longfellow failed to establish living contact either with his own time or with the earlier ages into which he retreated. Even the world of nature was for the most part a blur to him, or a storehouse of metaphors and similes.¹² His poems of the sea are indeed uniformly excellent, possibly because the images in them were stamped upon his mind before he began the rhetorician's quest of analogies, but elsewhere his observation was slight, superficial, and inaccurate. He knew the names of only the commonest birds and trees and flowers, and in what he says of these he makes such ludicrous blunders as that in "The Birds of Killingworth":

The bluebird balanced on some topmost spray,
Flooding with melody the neighborhood.

The usual explanation of Longfellow's weakness in grasp of fact is that he experienced life through books; but this assertion does not sufficiently distinguish him from such poets as Petrarch, Ronsard, Leopardi, and Milton, of whom the same thing may be said. It was not so much that he drew his materials and inspiration from literature, for of course it matters little whence these may come, as that even in his reading he showed the same defect of intensity that we have elsewhere seen in him. His excessive documentation in *Hyperion* does not suggest a mind that is moving masterfully among books, compelling them to its purposes, but a mind reclining upon them. Here too he was content with surfaces.

Longfellow knew more about the Middle Ages than he did about any other period of history, yet he did not catch its

¹² Examples of Longfellow's observation of nature, such as it was, are to be found in the Journal entries for July 25, 1836; May 18, 1838; August 1, 1838; September 2, 1838; October 8, 1839; February 26, 1847; April 25, 1847; July 23, 1850; August 17, 1850; September 4, 1854.

essential spirit. In *The Golden Legend*, the least unsatisfactory of his dramatic writings, he softens and sentimentalizes the great mediæval figure of the Devil out of all recognition, toying amiably with conceptions of which he has never sounded the depth. In *Hyperion*¹³ the best thing he can find to say for the mediæval monks is that they copied old manuscripts; but because they did so he thinks that "surely we can pardon something to those superstitious ages, and perhaps even the mysticism of the scholastic philosophy, since, after all, we can find no harm in it." A remark of this kind, incidentally showing that the writer knows little about either mysticism or scholastic philosophy, opens a vista of speculation which the friends of Longfellow hesitate to follow. Although he spent much of his mature life in the study and translation of Dante, he seems never to have realized the grim uncompromising power of the Florentine, the intensity of his hatreds, the stark reality of sin to him, and the depth of his tragic sense. Again, Longfellow was fond of the burly Jean Paul Richter, and also of the passionate Heinrich Heine, but in his translations, comments, and frequent imitations of these writers he blurred and emasculated them both. In his study as in the outer world, Longfellow flinched from all violence, satire, and stern denunciation. Such a mind as Dean Swift's, for example, was entirely beyond his ken. He felt that literature should be soothing, edifying, an expression of a somewhat vague because a universal benevolence. A characteristic literary judgment is seen in the remark: "Whiled the morning away with Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*—a clever, cutting, amusing, disagreeable book, showing too much of the coarse lining of London life."¹⁴

To what extent Longfellow regarded Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea* as the model of *Evangeline* is open to question, but it is certain at least that he knew this poem well and that he could have learned from it how such a task as he had in hand

¹³Book I, chap. VII.

¹⁴Entry for August 7, 1848.

might best be done. A comparison of the two idyls is therefore instructive. Goethe makes his people speak for him; Longfellow describes. Goethe is direct, vigorous, humorous, and dramatic; Longfellow is smooth, vague, and dreamy. In the German poem the hero plays the leading part; in the American he soon disappears from sight and the heroine holds all attention. Goethe makes the reader feel that the action is unrolling before his eyes in a continuous present. In reading Longfellow we listen to "a tale of long ago," narrated by a professional reciter. And one reason for these differences may be stated thus: Goethe emerged from German Romanticism; Longfellow never did.¹⁵

Longfellow's reading was extensive, ranging through eight or ten languages, but it was not aggressive, energetic, or deep. He had no strong interest in Shakespeare, Milton, or Dryden. Chaucer and Burns and Gray meant much to him, but he never mentions Donne, Vaughan, Crashaw, or any of the other subtle poets of the seventeenth century from whom Thoreau and Emerson gained so much. He recognized the greatness of Goethe, upon whom he lectured annually at Harvard, without penetrating deeply into that supreme mind. For the most part, such reading as he was free to choose was done discursively in the writings of lesser and often negligible men—the Romantic poets of Germany, travelers, essayists, and poetasters. Ruskin's *Stones of Venice* he greatly admired, and he shared the enthusiasm of his American generation for Carlyle without feeling that it involved acceptance of Carlyle's opinions. It would seem that he read partly for information and partly for rest, scarcely ever to increase his stock of ideas, and hardly at all with the conscious purpose of deepening his experience of life.

¹⁵ The influence of Germany and of German literature upon Longfellow has been considered with admirable thoroughness and acumen in J. T. Hatfield's *New Light on Longfellow*, *passim*. See also *Hyperion*, I, 5, for the poet's early estimate of Jean Paul Richter; *Hyperion* II, 8, for a curiously doubtful treatment of Goethe; *Hyperion* III, 6, for comment upon Uhland, and *Hyperion* IV, 3, for a discussion of Hoffmann.

"I think it exquisite," he says, "to read good novels in bed with wax lights and silver candlesticks,—Disraeli's Vivian Grey, for example."¹⁶

No comment upon Longfellow's reading can be just or complete, however, unless it allows for the fact that during many years of his life,¹⁷ and certainly from 1842 to 1857, he suffered so seriously with his eyes that he could read only in daylight, and had to depend for his knowledge of current literature very largely upon the eyes and voice of his wife. Her literary tastes as well as his own may well have been consulted in the selection of books for fireside reading.—And it is possible, also, that even Longfellow's poetry was affected, as Wordsworth's had been in a more beneficial way, by this weakness of his eyes. The ease and fluency of his composition, as well as its occasional banality, may be in some way connected with the fact that he was often obliged to write with his eyes closed and was physically incapable of severe revision. He bore this affliction, of course a grievous one to a man of his tastes and powers, with his accustomed patient silence, mentioning it for the first time to his friend Freiligrath after it had continued for fifteen years, and then only in order to deny a newspaper report that he had lost his sight entirely.

The probable effect upon Longfellow's mind of his professional career as a student and teacher of modern languages must not be ignored in this connection. Perhaps it has never been sufficiently recognized that the mental processes involved in such learning and teaching have slight relation to the higher processes of thought. During those years of life in which most men attain whatever mental maturity they are to have, Longfellow was hearing lessons in French, German, Spanish, and

¹⁶ *Journal*, June 11, 1839. For further indications of Longfellow's reading, see the *Journal* for May 21, 1846; June 4, 1846; March 27, 1847; March 13, 1848; May 22, 1852; June 5, 1854; May 10, 1859; November 27 to December 7, 1872; January 22, 1874. See also letter of November 29, 1874.

¹⁷ See letter to Freiligrath of November 3, 1857.

Italian. His Journal bears frequent witness that he detested this work, chiefly because it did not call forth the best of his powers. "Perhaps the worst thing in a college life," he wrote in 1838, "is this having your mind constantly a playmate for boys,—constantly adapting itself to them, instead of stretching out and grappling with *men's* minds."¹⁸ Of course it should have been a sufficient answer to this complaint that the minds of the men whose works he was reading with his classes were always to be grappled with; but Longfellow, as we have seen, regarded literature as an object of appreciation rather than of close and searching thought.¹⁹

When we consider Longfellow's good fortune, his preoccupation with the past, his lifelong immersion in books, and the sheltered peace of his academic career, we see that it must have been considerably easier for him to attain that serenity which breathes through most of his work than it would have been, let us say, for Herman Melville. The harsh facts of life seldom touched him. He knew to the full the grief of personal bereavement, but the world's woe and misery never lay heavy upon his heart. He knew even less of sin, apparently, than Emerson did, and far less of moral and intellectual struggle. In writing to his family, and later in *Outre-Mer* and *Hyperion*, about the Rome and Paris, the Venice and Madrid which he visited as a young man, he gives his readers no hint of the cruelty and vice that were then and have always been among the major facts concerning those cities. Yet we are not to

¹⁸ *Journal*, September 10, 1838.

¹⁹ Longfellow's references to his teaching may be seen in the *Journal* entries of September 10 and 12, 1838; October 17, 1838; November 5, 1838; September 14, 1839; October 26, 1846; April 3, 1848; March 6, 1849; March 29, 1850; April 22, 1850; April 19, 1854; September 12, 1854. A vigorous and remarkably liberal criticism of American colleges, with a definite plan for their improvement on the European model, is to be found in his letter to his father of March 10, 1829, quoted in full by J. T. Hatfield, *New Light on Longfellow*, pp. 20 ff. See also the letters, as given in the *Life*, of December 20, 1829; May 12, 1837; June 2, 1838; March 18, 1839; September 1, 1839; September 21, 1839; May 3, 1854.

suppose that he deliberately left out the darker aspects of the reality he saw. It seems, rather, that he was morally naïve, inexperienced, and innocent, as it were, by default.

The temptation to speak of Longfellow primarily in negative terms must of course be withstood, and also the tendency to depict him chiefly by contrast with his contemporaries; yet these contrasts and negations are unavoidable in a dispassionate critical estimate of the man and his work. The method of comparison, too much decried in recent years, is indeed as indispensable to critical as it is to dramatic writing; and just as we see the Lord Hamlet more clearly because of Horatio's presence, so Longfellow may be made to stand forth by comparing him with other writers of his time and neighborhood. There need be no injustice to him in the use of this method if it is made clear that he had positive qualities of his own, shared by few of his fellows.

Thinking of Longfellow in this comparative way, we see at once that he is by no means the Hamlet, but rather the Horatio, of his group—a "chorus character" voicing not so much his own idiosyncrasy as the normal, often the average, thoughts and feelings of his time. We find, also, that when standing in the company of his peers he looks somewhat pallid. In comparison with theirs, his thought lacks edge, his knowledge is lunar and literary, his moods are drowsy, and his opinions are vague. Unlike most of them, he does not seem to have earned but to have inherited his mental wealth. Seldom do we see him at work in the darkness of the mind, getting out his own ore. This man, we conclude, who never did a day's manual labor in his life, and who thought that he got enough physical exercise in putting on and off his overcoat, is somewhat deficient in mental muscle and in that spiritual strength which perhaps only the struggle with doubt can give.

There is an important sense, furthermore, in which we may say that this man, who spent his long life in reading and discuss-

ing and writing books, simply did not know enough, in the more vivid and poetic ways of knowing. One looks vainly through his pages for any sign of the amateur's acquaintance with science that gives bone and sinew to the writing of Emerson, providing it with a thousand flashing metaphors and profound analogies. He had none of Thoreau's knowledge of nature and skill in handicraft. He had nothing to correspond with Whittier's passionate concern about politics, with Melville's knowledge of the outer world of toil and danger, or with Hawthorne's grasp of the inner realities of the conscience. He lacked, moreover, a precious trait clearly seen in all these men—the sense of place and of utter devotion to it. Although he loved Portland and Cambridge, he could not have said, with Hawthorne, that New England was the largest lump of earth his heart could hold, nor did he draw strength of mind and spirit, as Whittier and Thoreau and Emerson learned to do, from the old familiar scene. In his *wanderjahre* he escaped provincialism in its good as well as in its bad aspects, so that—absurd though it is to regard him as a man without a country—even in his Americanism there is something diffuse, diluted, and faintly German.

With the decline of Calvinism in America a severe spiritual tension was relaxed, and this relaxation—except in those few minds that could maintain on the intellectual level an intensity like that lost on the other—was shown in all except the active phases of life. The Puritan's realization that life is essentially tragic and his sense of "man suffering among awful Powers and Forms" were dispersed into the shallow optimism and trivial externality of the business man going forth to exploit the continent. Longfellow did little to retard this process. Rather, in the range of his activity, he exemplified it.

When the poet was given an honorary degree at Oxford in 1868, it was said that his white hair and beard seemed to be drawn on over the face of a young man. His handwriting—simple, clear, pleasing, and unobtrusive—was much the same in

his old age that it had been in his boyhood. The prose of *Kavanagh*, written when he was past forty, is no richer in rhythm, smoother in transition, or more vigorous in thought, than that of his undergraduate letters. He praises Agassiz on that scientist's fiftieth birthday for being "still a child," and it is elsewhere evident that he shared with his time and land a sentimental feeling for the unlearned simplicities of extreme youth. His own mind was mellow before it was ripe. It had the grace of gentleness without the usual concomitant of strength. Accordingly, he did little to correct the grotesque opinion current in his America and ours that artistic creation is the work of women, or, if of men at all, then of relaxed and dreamy men in their less earnest hours. He did not correct it because, unconsciously, he shared it. In *Michael Angelo*, written late in his life, he does indeed take over from Vasari a more worthy conception of the artist's function, but usually he felt that serious work is done by practical men such as his own father, and that "daydreaming"—a term which would include poetic composition—is the prerogative of women. One sees how this notion would grow up in a country just catching breath, beginning to give a little leisure to its most favored women but none to its men. No one who allows for the surrounding facts can blame Longfellow, always a spokesman rather than a leader, for accepting this view. One can only observe that he did so, and deplore the consequences. Among these one of the most deplorable is the failure of his mind to gain year by year in strength and depth and virility, as the mind of a poet should. He does not carry out the dedication of himself to the sterner tasks of poetry which he made, early in life, in the closing stanzas of "Prelude." The dramatic poem *Christus*, upon which he brooded for more than thirty years and which he regarded, his brother says, "as the really great work of his life," seems to us a rather featureless performance, a product of relaxed mental fibre.

Longfellow apparently did not regard the work of a poet as the serene yet intense energizing of all the faculties, a pinnacle of experience to which all normal men should aspire, but rather what is called, in the jargon of contemporary science, "a highly specialized function." He believed that the poet stands apart from the world's work, and that his idleness is atoned for only by his effort to edify and instruct, or else to soothe and entertain, those more seriously engaged. He is the blind harper, set aside from fighting by a recognized defect, yet winning his bread and ale by the songs he sings in the hall before the battered and drowsing warriors. That one might sing a better song for having seen the battle and for having given blow for blow is what he never knew.

In the sixth chapter of *Hyperion*, while engaged in a rambling condemnation of what he calls "the New Philosophy," Longfellow says that one manifestation of the philosophic spirit of the age "is that of poetic revery. Plato of old had dreams like these, and the Mystics of the Middle Ages; and still their disciples walk in the cloud-land and dream-land of this poetic philosophy. . . . I willingly confess that such day-dreams appeal strongly to my imagination. . . . Yet I recognize them as day-dreams only; as shadows, not substantial things." In other words, Longfellow felt that the work to which he devoted his life was divorced from reality. Whether this feeling induced in him anything like the sense of isolation that Hawthorne so frequently complained of, his published writings do not show, but it often came over him as a vague unanalyzed pain. In his earlier verse and prose, leading up to the final statement in "Mezzo Cammin," we find a frequent iteration of the complaint that time is passing and he has done nothing. In fact he had done much, but not in the way of doing that was recognized by his generation; and therefore, until his work had been unmistakably accepted as contributing to the national task, he got from it little sense of release and fulfilment.

Emerson wrote to Longfellow after reading *Kavanagh*: "One thing struck me as I read,—that you win our gratitude too easily; for after our much experience of the squalor of New Hampshire and the pallor of Unitarianism, we are so charmed with elegance in an American book that we could forgive more vices than are possible to you."²⁰ The judgment is gently phrased but acute in thought—except that the "pallor of Unitarianism" has hardly ever been more clearly exhibited than it is in this particular book. Longfellow's mildness was partly due to his revulsion from the violence of surrounding America; what Emerson called his "elegance"—using a word which had not then gathered all of its present connotations—was a reaction from crudity; and what we condemn in him as merely genteel is to some extent caused by his dislike of the American vulgarian.

IV. POPULARITY

In Longfellow's time there were already in America many persons who had proceeded, in their effort after true culture, only so far as the "genteel." That is to say, their refinement was imitative, anxious, circumspect, and more a duty than a joy. Just as the lower bourgeoisie always fears contamination from the laboring class far more than the members of the aristocracy need to do, so these persons shunned their crude and bustling America, lived in Rome or Paris when they could, and cultivated an English accent when they could not. Longfellow, without being of them, seemed to be for them. His themes were pleasantly remote from the workaday world. His thoughts never grazed the distressing, the indecorous, or the indecent. He left the serious problems of life to serious minds, and yet there was always enough easily recognizable middle-class morality in his work to make him seem entirely safe in a country still distrustful of beauty for its own sake.

²⁰ Samuel Longfellow, *Life* (1886), II, 140.

With this class of persons the poet's popularity began—a popularity the like of which has been enjoyed by very few poets, if by any, in the history of literature. It extended not through America alone but into England, where he was as much read during his lifetime as any native poet then was. It ran through Europe, the Orient, and South America, in translations almost innumerable. Wherever there was a middle class naïve in sentiment and inexperienced in art, superficially emotional, longing for some haze of fancy to shroud the bleak realities of life, there he found at first his public. Moreover, he soon became “a treasure of the humble,” as he has never ceased to be; and even though the sophisticated should abandon him utterly his reputation is safe with that body of readers which has kept and guarded the fame of John Bunyan and Robert Burns.

When Longfellow was an old man, his publisher, J. T. Fields, wrote: “I remember how instantaneously, in the year 1839, ‘The Voices of the Night’ sped triumphantly on its way. At present his [Longfellow’s] currency in Europe is almost unparalleled. Twenty-four publishing houses in England have issued the whole or a part of his works. Many of his poems have been translated into Russian and Hebrew. ‘Evangeline’ has been translated three times into German, and ‘Hiawatha’ has not only gone into nearly all the modern languages but can be read in Latin. I have seen translations of all Longfellow’s principal works, in prose and poetry, in French, Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Swedish, and Danish. The Emperor of Brazil has himself translated and published ‘Robert of Sicily,’ and in China they use a fan which has become tremendously popular on account of the ‘Psalm of Life’ being printed on it in the language of the Celestial Empire. Professor Kneeland, who went to the national millennial celebration in Iceland, told me that when he was leaving . . . the people said to him: ‘Tell Longfellow that we love him; tell him that Iceland knows him by heart.’ ”²¹

²¹ Annie Fields, *Authors and Friends*, p. 18.

It is said that Longfellow wrote certain poems for himself alone, which he never published. However this may be, it is certain that his published poems are never soliloquies. They were meant not for a few highly cultivated readers but for all. Communication meant more to him than self-expression. He did not seek what is now called "originality," but rather he sought to be a good spokesman. His two best-known poems, "Excelsior" and "A Psalm of Life," are not so clearly the expression of a quiet college professor as they are of a restless and energetic new country. He won his public in the recognized way, by phrasing its own thoughts and beliefs, so that there was no false modesty in the expression of indebtedness at the end of his poem "The Poet's Fame":

His, and not his, are the lays
He sings; and their fame
Is his, and not his; and the praise
And the pride of a name.

To the social purpose which actuated Longfellow in his writing may be attributed several qualities of his style, and in particular its pellucid limpidity. Though the stream of his thought may be shallow, it is clear, and it flows. Always chiefly concerned to convey his thought and feeling, he used verse not as an end in itself but as a vehicle of communication. He had the good craftsman's liking for the finished task, and he felt that the task of the creative artist is not finished so long as there remains in his work anything difficult or obscure which a greater care of his might clear away. Thus, for example, he used the normal prose order of words rather more consistently than other poets of his time, consulting not his own ease but that of his reader. As George William Curtis said of him, he "threw nothing into the mist to make it look large." His art is of that good kind which conceals itself. What may seem at

first to be mere triteness in his style often turns out to be exact rightness. That stultifying fear of the hackneyed expression by which the poets of our day are tormented was unknown to him, partly because he wished to say not new and clever and startling things but the things that had been tried by the ages and found true. Moreover, he wished to hold attention upon his thought or story and not upon himself. Again and again, by this hidden and conscientious and self-abnegating art, he worked out such little masterpieces of simplicity as "Afternoon in February" and "The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls," in which humanity seems to be sighing together in monotone. These things attract little attention not because they are negligible and not because they are elementary, but because they are as simple and right as spring water or the air we breathe. It is when we have tried and failed to make something as good in the same kind that we begin to discern their value.

Longfellow's ability to sink himself and his own moods out of sight enabled him to excel as a translator and as a narrative poet. There are, to be sure, many dull passages in *Evangeline* and many shallows in the *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, which betray the hand of a professional writer doing his hundred lines a day. Longfellow's deficiency in first-hand experience and his shrinking from violence enfeebles not a few of his stories. Even the most decided success in his narrative writing, the account of the fight between Miles Standish and the Indians, falls far short of the terrible tale told in his source. On the other hand, most of his narrative work is straight-grained, objective, moving steadily onward with a strong sense of the goal.

In every poem he wrote Longfellow had a definite thing to say. This might be, and often it was, a platitude. For that he had little care, because he knew that we live in an old and iterative world and that the mere novelty of an idea is a supposition against it. Together with his thought, he had at the same moment a clear notion of the form in which it could be

expressed most effectively. Form and substance seem to have occurred to him at the same instant, as two aspects of one thing, and it is for this reason that in all his better work the thought seems to fill the form without crowding or inflation.

Even the more acute readers of Longfellow have seldom recognized that his sense of form was at all uncommon, partly because the simple stanzas and meters of his familiar work—most of them derived from the popular ballad, Protestant hymnology, and the Romantic poets of Germany—are seldom associated with this Latin trait. Close reading of even his feebler early lyrics will show, however, that they usually contain little that could be dispensed with. For all their apparent laxity or ease, they are likely to be succinct, though seldom terse or laconic. Nearly everything irrelevant has been pruned away.

Only when this is realized are we prepared to understand Longfellow's remarkable success in the sonnet. It is here, more clearly than elsewhere, that we see him working as a conscious artist, making beauty for its own sake, shaping form unhastily with a slow-pulsed hand that never trembles. And it is perhaps from his sonnets that the sophisticated reader is most likely to gain that respect which may induce an intelligent re-reading of the poet's entire work. In the single sonnet "Nature" the best of his qualities are all implicit. Without a word too many or too few it phrases an ancient unchanging verity with quiet precision. The thought is obvious and the feeling familiar; the "as-so" design is hackneyed; the metaphor is by no means fresh; yet the poem is so beautifully constructed, its music is so delicate an echo of the mood, it is so perfectly one and indivisible, that it lives in memory as a piece of still perfection.

The beauty of this sonnet is not in the single lines and not in any of its aspects taken separately, but in the architectonic, the just proportion, the harmony and unity of the whole composition. And it is precisely in what may be called his sense of the whole that Longfellow is most remarkable as technician and

creative artist. Herein, and not in the verbal virtuosity of a Swinburne or the finished texture of a Tennyson, lies his chief æsthetic excellence. In this important respect, moreover, his art improved and ripened with the years.

Those who might otherwise now be Longfellow's readers do not any longer possess this sense. They have fallen into the vicious fashion of testing poets by single flashing lines or isolated passages, as though poetry were an elaborate way of being witty. Finding in Longfellow few "jewels five words long," they overlook the final and intellectual beauty of completion that glorifies such a poem as "My Lost Youth," entirely compensating by its total loveliness for any defect in the details.

Both the verse and the prose of Longfellow reveal a habit of mind, common in his time but not in ours, which impedes his direct communication with the reader. For our taste he is too heavily metaphorical. Moreover, his metaphors are often used rather for decorative purposes than for clarification. "How beautiful this brown water is!" exclaims the hero of *Kavanagh*,²² speaking of a brook flowing among pine trees. "It is like wine, or the nectar of the gods of Olympus; as if the falling Hebe had poured it from her goblet." And the schoolmaster does not help us by rejoining: "More like the mead or metheglin of the northern gods, spilled from the drinking-horns of Valhalla." These are the words of one who finds "books in the running brooks" in a sense Shakespeare did not intend. Both speakers, perfectly representing the author, are so intent upon their fine phrases that they fail to see the water as anything more than a rhetorical theme. This is due to that vice of professional and self-conscious phrase-making which the ancient rhetoricians foisted upon western literature, making it appear that the work of the literary artist is that of external adornment rather than that of imaginative penetration. Of this vice Longfellow was a late though not a flagrant example. He acquired it in his

²² Chap. XXI.

schooling, from public oratory, from sermons, and from the prevailing philosophy of his time.²³

Longfellow himself, by no means recognizing the rhetorical habit as a vice, evidently thought it an innate characteristic of his mind. In *Hyperion* he says of the hero, who stands for himself, that his "thoughts were twin-born; the thought and its figurative expression in the outer world. Thus, through the quiet still waters of his soul each image floated double—swan and shadow." This may be so, but it does not explain the many instances in which we find Longfellow going in search of analogies and fetching them back from far. Such a search is common to all literature, but it was hastened by the teaching of Deism that Nature is God's revelation of divine truth. American Transcendentalism accepted this teaching and adapted it to the homiletic tastes of the American audience. Longfellow stands with the group of writers who used Nature as a storehouse—or one might say as a schoolhouse—of metaphor, as Holmes uses it when he exclaims at the end of "The Chambered Nautilus":

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea!

In an early article on Sidney's *Defence of Poesy*²⁴ Longfellow asserts that "the natural tendency of poetry is to give us correct moral impressions, and thereby advance the cause of truth." This is a doctrine for which respectable authority can be assembled, and one which Sidney himself had urged before an audience as Puritanical as Longfellow's own. It was the only doctrine upon which a poetry that should be widely read in America could be based. Longfellow's acceptance of it—much

²³ One sees the poet's conscious quest of telling phrases, valued for their own sakes, in the passages of his *Journal* for March 15, 1838; October 18, 1838; July 23, 1847; July 31, 1847; May 8, 1859.

²⁴ *North American Review*, XXXIV, 56 (Jan., 1832).

more apparent in the early poems by which he won his reputation than in his later work—was not peculiar to him. Bryant, Whittier, Holmes, and Cooper were in their several ways as didactic as he. Emerson and Thoreau were always preachers, and so, with a somewhat different gospel, was Walt Whitman.

We cannot today read Longfellow or his contemporaries with full understanding unless we realize that the ancient art of public oratory, now nearly lost, was in his time a living thing, earnestly studied as a chief means of rising in the world. Like the rhetoric of the ancients, it involved a search not so much for thoughts as for phrases. The most important branch of this rhetoric of public utterance had always been, in New England, that of homiletics or sermon-writing. Together with the carving of tombstones, indeed, this was one of the two arts that had flourished there from the first, providing all members of the community with valuable training in close logical thought. The prose of the pulpit might have been in America, as it had been in England, the model for a great secular prose, and it might even have exerted a restraining and elevating influence upon our verse; but in Longfellow's time the severe dialectic of Edwards was giving way to edification and public entertainment.

These matters have present importance because of the pervasive influence of the sermon upon America and also because of its influence upon Longfellow himself. The poems of his earlier years were often sermons in verse, addressed to a public inured to the simple rhetorical methods they employed. We should realize, therefore, that what he called in his *Journal* "a good sermon" was likely to express conventional thought, seldom critically examined, in an urbane and vivid metaphorical way. Furthermore, if he avoids hard thinking and stern speaking, abdicates intellectual leadership, lets the Philistine and the moneygrubber go with his blessing, and seems content to embroider the fringe of life with the arabesques of fancy, all

this may be partly because the preachers of New England had in too many instances made the same surrender.

And it was partly because he was not an original thinker. Philosophical and theological discussion seemed to him, as we have seen, a waste of time. His own theology was so vague and elastic that his mind was never exercised in defense of it. His views on the questions of his day were those of his community. He had, as Holmes remarked, "a receptive rather than an aggressive temperament." He never enlisted in what Emerson called "the soldiery of dissent."

A poet's interest in thought and his respect for it may be tested by discovering what he thinks about criticism. Longfellow's remarks on this topic are numerous and are almost all unfavorable, tinged by sentimentalism and based upon the assumption that the critic's work is chiefly faultfinding. Thus he says in *Table Talk*: "Doubtless criticism was originally benignant, pointing out the beauties of a work rather than its defects. The passions of men have made it malignant, as the bad heart of Procrustes turned the bed, the symbol of repose, into an instrument of torture." The best that he can say of criticism is that it appears to be an unavoidable evil. One of the more labored aphorisms in *Table Talk* asserts that "as no saint can be canonized until the Devil's advocate has exposed all his evil deeds . . . so no poet can take his station among the gods until the critics have said all that can be said against him."²⁵

In this same collection of apothegms Longfellow passes, unconsciously, one of the most searching criticisms ever made upon his own work. "The tragic element in poetry," he says "is like Satan in Alchemy—the Malevolent, the Destroyer of Nature; but without it no true Aurum Potabile or Elixir of Life can be made." This is true, and it is also true that Long-

²⁵ Longfellow's assertion that he was indifferent to adverse criticism of his own work is amusingly contradicted by the evidence of his own letters and *Journal*. Compare the letter of January 2, 1840 with that of April 21, 1839. See also the *Journal* for October 1, 1839 and for December 11, 1845.

fellow's writing has no "tragic element." There is in it a mild melancholy, reflected from the *Weltschmerz* of his German masters, but no hint of that "majestic sadness at the doubtful doom of human kind" which he might have caught from his greater master, Dante.

But Longfellow's function in our literature was to release energy and not to restrict or guide it, certainly not to suggest that it might come to a tragic end. He was the poet of sentiment. The steep of ecstasy and the pits of despair he never scaled or descended. He did what his times demanded and made possible, or, in a sense, necessary. When he began to write we had still a continent to subdue, a civil conflict to survive, faith in ourselves to gain and the respect of the world to win. So considered, it was not a time for criticism but for the utterance of every cheerful hope. Different men, to be sure, were even then doing a different work. While Longfellow sat by the fire in his luxurious study, dreaming out the acquiescent lyrics that would soon lull a million readers to his mood, there was a young man sitting by a sheet-iron stove not fifteen miles away, in a shanty he had built with his own hands beside a lake in the woods, and this young man was writing a prose book intensely, even bitterly, critical of nearly all that was then going on in the land. But the poems of Longfellow were sold by the hundred thousand in some twenty languages, and the full fame of Thoreau has not even yet arrived.

In this comparison there is some injustice to Longfellow, who served his country perhaps as well by quiet persuasion as a keener mind might have done by condemnation. His veneration for the past, as the sum of all recorded human worth, amounted almost to a piety and a passion. One of the most significant of his utterances is the unobtrusive last line of "Footsteps of Angels":

Such as these have lived and died.

He is thinking here of his own dead friends, and especially of his

dead wife, but the line covers also his abiding sense of the human heroism and nobility that have made our planet holy; it expresses his grateful dependence upon the total human tradition. This is the moral aspect of that ancient doctrine of imitation which is now, for most of us, very hard to understand. It is the attitude of hero-worship which made Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* for centuries a school of conduct. To Longfellow it seemed axiomatic, and he summed it up in the hackneyed lines:

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime.

That contempt for sanctified names and that lowbred delight in idol-smashing which has debased too much recent historical and biographical writing would have seemed to him not only insolent but wasteful. He considered the past our chief guide through the present and our best clue to the future; and also he thought it a main task of the poet to appraise the work of those who have gone before and so make it live anew in each generation. Such work he thought particularly urgent in America, where there had been so sharp a break with tradition. He thought America needed to be enriched in mind and spirit before she was corrected, and he set himself to the task of bringing her the wealth of other times and lands. Dominated by this motive, he did not wish to be unique, bizarre, eccentric. He wished to be faithful, sane, normal, and representative. He was like an heir living on the inherited capital of a great estate, adding little but managing well, with a deep sense of obligation to those who preceded him and to those who were to follow.

What was worthy of praise in this literary retrospection has been indicated. What it cost is obvious. It withdrew Longfellow's attention from events and ideas of the first magnitude, thus giving apparent sanction to the belief that the business of poetry and of the arts in general is to provide a temporary escape from actuality, rather than to pierce and illumine that

actuality and so to transform it. This belief he himself expressed, as in "The Day is Done":

Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling
And banish the thoughts of day.

Thus he relegated art to a Sabbatical position, leaving the Philistine free for at least six days of unrestricted Philistinism. True though it may be that if he had claimed more he might have secured less, we cannot suppose that his actual claim was the result of any such calculation. He asked for poetry what he thought it deserved, and in asking so little he represented the attitude of his country.

V. FINAL ESTIMATES

In every extensive discussion of Longfellow this question is unavoidable: Was he essentially American, and what was the nature of his Americanism? It would be of no slight assistance to those who consider this problem if the terms "American" and "Americanism" had been clearly defined. They have not been. Some think that they should refer to traits regarded as peculiar to the inhabitants of this country, and others, holding that there are no such traits, contend that the term "Americanism" must cover qualities originating elsewhere. The distinction has a bearing upon our estimate of Longfellow.

Undeterred by this uncertainty, a perennial discussion of Americanism as it relates to our literature has been maintained for over a century, sweeping up in recent years into a frenzy of literary patriotism. Longfellow himself joined in the discussion, and on both sides. Twelve years before Emerson delivered at Harvard his classic utterance on this theme, "The American Scholar," Longfellow spoke in his Commencement Oration at

Bowdoin on "Our Native Writers."²⁶ Here he said only what every one was saying, that because "no people are richer than we in the treasures of nature," therefore we may rejoice "in the hope of beauty and sublimity in our literature." Seven years later he turns aside from a review of Sir Philip Sidney²⁷ to "whisper this request" in the ears of American poets, "that they should be more original, and withal more national. . . . In order to effect this, they have only to write more naturally, to write from their feelings and impressions, from the influence of what they see around them, and not from any preconceived notions of what poetry ought to be, caught by reading many books and imitating many models." Five years later still, while reviewing Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* for the same magazine, he expressed himself in similar vein: "One of the prominent characteristics of these tales is that they are national in character. The author has chosen his themes among the traditions of New England, the dusty legends of 'the good old Colony times, when we lived under a king.' This is the right material for story. . . . The dreary old Puritanical times begin to look romantic in the distance."

Longfellow here advocates not the choice of themes from contemporary America but those that have been mellowed by the years and are really as remote as the legends of Europe. What he sought was the effect of romantic distance, and, having this, he cared little whether the setting was native or foreign. Again we see, then, that his main passion was for the past. With the present his imagination did not readily work. He was in this like the schoolmaster in *Kavanagh*, whose mind was filled with "huge cloudy symbols of a high romance" never transferred to paper. "What Mr. Churchill most desired," says Longfellow, with perhaps a conscious reference to his own situation, "was before him. But he could not see it as an object apart from

²⁶ T. W. Higginson, *Life*, pp. 47 ff.

²⁷ *North American Review*, *loc. cit.*, note 24.

himself; and as he was gazing at what was remote and strange and indistinct, the nearer incidents of aspiration, love, and death escaped him. They were too near to be clothed by the imagination with the golden vapors of romance; for the familiar seems trivial, and only the distant and unknown completely fill and satisfy the mind.”²⁸

On the general question of Americanism in literature, however, Longfellow changed his mind. One of the characters in *Kavanagh*²⁹ remarks to the hero: “Let us have our literature national. If it is not national it is nothing.” He gets this reply: “On the contrary, it may be a great deal. Nationality is a good thing to a certain extent, but universality is better. All that is best in the great poets of all countries is not what is national in them, but what is universal. . . . And as for having it so wild and uncultivated as you want it, I have only to say that all literature, as well as all art, is the result of culture and intellectual refinement. . . . As the blood of all nations is mingling with our own, so will their thoughts and feelings mingle with our literature. We shall draw from the Germans tenderness, from the Spaniards passion, from the French vivacity, to mingle more and more with our English good sense. And this will give us universality, so much to be desired.”

Whether this change of opinion—one of the rare instances of growth to be found in the poet’s mental history—was caused by his observation of the universalizing tendency in his own work or by the fact that foreign immigration was suggesting new notions of what America was to be, at any rate it was a change in the right direction.

If Longfellow had been able to see precisely what sort of poetry America needed and had been endowed with the will and the power to make precisely that, it is not clear that his work would have been in many ways different. She needed a deeper sense of beauty, respect for the arts, wider mental

²⁸ *Kavanagh*, chap. XXVIII.

²⁹ Chap. XX.

horizons, veneration for the past, and tradition. He provided at least the means of getting these. There were other things equally necessary, such as restraint, humility, depth of thought, free play of ideas, but most of these are the gift of the critic. It was Longfellow's task to initiate the difficult transition from a moralistic to an æsthetic regime in literature. He did this the more effectively because he himself stood halfway between the extremes, and it is interesting to observe how, as the decades went by, the didactic element in his work was steadily subordinated. The pressure of necessity was lessening for many thousands in America. They were untrained in leisure or delight, which they regarded as dangerous if not reprehensible. Any such pure beauty as that in the Odes of Keats they would have ignored. They had enjoyed so little "schooling in the polite pleasures" that these had to come at first in the familiar guise of edification. In the poems of Longfellow they did so come. Moreover, he drew us gently back, after a long period of intellectual isolation, toward the main currents of the world's thought. As scholar and teacher, translator and editor, travel-writer and poet, he did much valuable work in what Barrett Wendell called the "transplanting of culture." He deepened our sense of the American past. His example taught us that a life devoted to thought and artistic creation may be dignified and useful. He probably did more than all our other poets together to enlarge in America the audience for poetry, and certainly he did more than all of them combined to apprise the rest of the world that we are not entirely songless. In his unquestioning idealism, in his moral simplicity and directness, in his natural honesty of mind and heart which could afford to go unadorned because it was beautiful in its essence, Americans have always recognized qualities to which they aspire. **On the whole**, then, it seems best not to deny him the name of **an American poet**.

We made him what he was. Near the end of the novel

*Kavanagh*³⁰ a portrait of the minister, ordered and paid for by the parish, is overseen in every detail by the ladies of his church while it is growing on the painter's easel. These ladies see to it, being thoroughly genteel in their taste, that most of the traits of strong masculine character possessed by the sitter are simply left out; and the sitter himself allows them to have their way because he thinks it only right that they should get their money's worth. The final comment upon this portrait is strangely appropriate to the career and reputation of Longfellow himself: "The expression of the face was exceedingly bland and resigned, perhaps a little wanting in strength, but on the whole satisfactory to the parish."

The retreat from Longfellow, which has recently become almost a stampede, has been caused by nothing connected with the art of poetry. He is obnoxious to some as a representative of the prosperous middle class, to others as a New Englander, and to a third group as a "Puritan"—however little that deeply colored word may be understood. His enormous popularity has worked in some ways as a misfortune to American letters because it has recently suggested to many writers that whatever he had they must avoid. Now he had good sense, moderation, simplicity, reticence, faith in his country, tradition, sense of form, and some learning. It is not well for us to avoid quite all these traits.

Mrs. Mary Austin tells us in her book, *The American Rhythm*, that the Navaho Indians have a nine-day performance of dance and song which is "designed to make the smell of a man's tribe seem a good smell to him." Intelligent and sympathetic reading of Longfellow's poetry should have the same desirable effect upon young Americans, enabling them to see both what is good and what is deficient in our culture, so that their pride in it may be solidly grounded. In reading him we read ourselves. His poetry provides a bridge by means of which we may return

³⁰ Chap. XIX.

at will into an America simpler and quieter than that of the present, yet indefeasibly our own. It lends depth and distance to our time, linking what we are with what we have been. Here is an assurance and a serenity not easy to find elsewhere. Here is beauty and charm and glamour that are part of our birthright. If this treasure is lost through our ignorance or impatient scorn of the past, we shall all be the poorer. To every educated American it should be a pride and a pleasure to know Longfellow well, to defend him wisely, and to hold him dear.

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

- 1807. Longfellow born, in Portland, Maine, February 27.
- 1821. Entered Bowdoin College.
- 1825. Graduated at Bowdoin, in the same class with Hawthorne.
- 1826. Went abroad to study modern languages, and remained for three years.
- 1829. Made professor of Modern Languages at Bowdoin College.
- 1831. Married Mary Storer Potter, of Portland.
- 1834. Accepted the chair of Modern Languages at Harvard College.
- 1835. Studied in Europe, particularly in the north. His wife died there.
- 1836. Assumed his duties at Harvard, boarding at Craigie House.
- 1839. Published the novel *Hyperion* and first collection of verse, *Voices of the Night*.
- 1841. Published *Ballads and Other Poems*.
- 1842. Went to Germany to regain health. Wrote *Poems on Slavery* on return voyage.
- 1843. Married Frances Elizabeth Appleton, daughter of a Boston merchant. Published *The Spanish Student*. Began his translation of Dante.
- 1845. Published *The Belfry of Bruges and Other Poems*.
- 1847. Published *Evangeline*.
- 1849. Published *Kavanagh*, an unsuccessful novel.
- 1854. Resigned his professorship at Harvard.
- 1855. Published *The Song of Hiawatha*.
- 1858. Published *The Courtship of Miles Standish*.
- 1861. Mrs. Longfellow died.
- 1863. First *Tales of a Wayside Inn* published.
- 1868. Last visit to Europe. Received honorary degrees at Oxford and Cambridge.

1874. Last series of the *Tales of a Wayside Inn* published.
1878. Published *Keramos and Other Poems*.
1880. Published *Ultima Thule*.
1882. Published *In the Harbor*. Died March 24.

Selections from
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

✱

PRELUDE

Pleasant it was, when woods were green
And winds were soft and low,
To lie amid some sylvan scene,
Where, the long drooping boughs between,
Shadows dark and sunlight sheen*
Alternate come and go;

Or where the denser grove receives
No sunlight from above,
But the dark foliage interweaves
In one unbroken roof of leaves,
Underneath whose sloping eaves
The shadows hardly move.

10

Beneath some patriarchal tree
I lay upon the ground;
His hoary arms uplifted he,
And all the broad leaves over me
Clapped their little hands in glee,
With one continuous sound;—

A slumberous sound, a sound that brings
The feelings of a dream,
As of innumerable wings,
As, when a bell no longer swings,
Faint the hollow murmur rings
O'er meadow, lake, and stream.

20

And dreams of that which cannot die,
Bright visions, came to me,
As lapped in thought I used to lie,

* notes at the end of the volume.

And gaze into the summer sky,
Where the sailing clouds went by,
Like ships upon the sea; 30

Dreams that the soul of youth engage
Ere Fancy has been quelled;
Old legends of the monkish page,
Traditions of the saint and sage,
Tales that have the rime of age,
And chronicles of eld.

And, loving still these quaint old themes,
Even in the city's throng
I feel the freshness of the streams,
That, crossed by shades and sunny gleams, 40
Water the green land of dreams,
The holy land of song.

Therefore, at Pentecost, which brings
The Spring, clothed like a bride,
When nestling buds unfold their wings,
And bishop's-caps have golden rings,
Musing upon many things,
I sought the woodlands wide.

The green trees whispered low and mild;
It was a sound of joy! 50
They were my playmates when a child,
And rocked me in their arms so wild!
Still they looked at me and smiled,
As if I were a boy;

And ever whispered, mild and low,
"Come, be a child once more!"
And waved their long arms to and fro,
And beckoned solemnly and slow;
Oh, I could not choose but go
Into the woodlands hoar,— 60

Into the blithe and breathing air,
 Into the solemn wood,
Solemn and silent everywhere!
Nature with folded hands seemed there,
Kneeling at her evening prayer!
 Like one in prayer I stood.

Before me rose an avenue
 Of tall and sombrous pines;
Abroad their fan-like branches grew,
And, where the sunshine darted through, 70
Spread a vapor soft and blue,
 In long and sloping lines.

And, falling on my weary brain,
 Like a fast-falling shower,
The dreams of youth came back again,—
Low lisplings of the summer rain,
Dropping on the ripened grain,
 As once upon the flower.

Visions of childhood! Stay, oh, stay!
 Ye were so sweet and wild! 80
And distant voices seemed to say,
“It cannot be! They pass away!
Other themes demand thy lay;
 Thou art no more a child!

“The land of Song within thee lies,
 Watered by living springs;
The lids of Fancy’s sleepless eyes
Are gates unto that Paradise;
Holy thoughts, like stars, arise;
 Its clouds are angels’ wings. 90

“Learn, that henceforth thy song shall be,
 Not mountains capped with snow,
Nor forests sounding like the sea,

Nor rivers flowing ceaselessly,
Where the woodlands bend to see
The bending heavens below.

“There is a forest where the din
Of iron branches sounds!
A mighty river roars between,
And whosoever looks therein 100
Sees the heavens all black with sin,
Sees not its depths, nor bounds.

“Athwart the swinging branches cast,
Soft rays of sunshine pour;
Then comes the fearful wintry blast;
Our hopes, like withered leaves, fall fast;
Pallid lips say, ‘It is past!
We can return no more!’

“Look, then, into thine heart, and write!
Yes, into Life’s deep stream! 110
All forms of sorrow and delight,
All solemn Voices of the Night,
That can soothe thee, or affright,—
Be these henceforth thy theme.”

1839

HYMN TO THE NIGHT

Ἄσπασίη, τριλλιστος

I heard the trailing garments of the Night
Sweep through her marble halls!
I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light
From the celestial walls!

I felt her presence, by its spell of might,
Stoop o’er me from above;
The calm, majestic presence of the Night,
As of the one I love.

I heard the sounds of sorrow and delight,
The manifold, soft chimes,
That fill the haunted chambers of the Night,
Like some old poet's rhymes. 10

From the cool cisterns of the midnight air
My spirit drank repose;
The fountain of perpetual peace flows there,—
From those deep cisterns flows.

O holy Night! from thee I learn to bear
What man has borne before!
Thou layest thy finger on the lips of Care,
And they complain no more. 20

Peace! Peace! Orestes-like I breathe this prayer!
Descend with broad-winged flight,
The welcome, the thrice-prayed for, the most fair,
The best-beloved Night!

1839

A PSALM OF LIFE

WHAT THE HEART OF THE YOUNG MAN SAID TO THE PSALMIST

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!—
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day. 10

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
 And our hearts, though stout and brave,
 Still, like muffled drums, are beating
 Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
 In the bivouac of Life,
 Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
 Be a hero in the strife!

20

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
 Let the dead Past bury its dead!
 Act,—act in the living Present!
 Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us
 We can make our lives sublime,
 And, departing, leave behind us
 Footprints on the sands of time;—

Footprints, that perhaps another,
 Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
 A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
 Seeing, shall take heart again.

30

Let us, then, be up and doing,
 With a heart for any fate;
 Still achieving, still pursuing,
 Learn to labor and to wait.

1838

FOOTSTEPS OF ANGELS

When the hours of Day are numbered,
 And the voices of the Night
 Wake the better soul, that slumbered,
 To a holy, calm delight;

Ere the evening lamps are lighted,
And, like phantoms grim and tall,
Shadows from the fitful firelight
Dance upon the parlor wall;

Then the forms of the departed
Enter at the open door;
The beloved, the true-hearted,
Come to visit me once more;

10

He, the young and strong, who cherished
Noble longings for the strife,
By the roadside fell and perished,
Weary with the march of life!

They, the holy ones and weakly,
Who the cross of suffering bore,
Folded their pale hands so meekly,
Spake with us on earth no more!

20

And with them the Being Beauteous,
Who unto my youth was given,
More than all things else to love me,
And is now a saint in heaven.

With a slow and noiseless footstep
Comes that messenger divine,
Takes the vacant chair beside me,
Lays her gentle hand in mine.

And she sits and gazes at me
With those deep and tender eyes,
Like the stars, so still and saint-like,
Looking downward from the skies.

30

Uttered not, yet comprehended,
Is the spirit's voiceless prayer,

Soft rebukes, in blessings ended,
Breathing from her lips of air.

Oh, though oft depressed and lonely,
All my fears are laid aside,
If I but remember only
Such as these have lived and died!

40
1839

THE REAPER AND THE FLOWERS

There is a Reaper, whose name is Death,
And, with his sickle keen,
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between.

“Shall I have naught that is fair?” saith he;
“Have naught but the bearded grain?
Though the breath of these flowers is sweet to me,
I will give them all back again.”

He gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes,
He kissed their drooping leaves;
It was for the Lord of Paradise
He bound them in his sheaves.

“My Lord has need of these flowerets gay,”
The Reaper said, and smiled;
“Dear tokens of the earth are they,
Where He was once a child.

“They shall all bloom in fields of light,
Transplanted by my care,
And saints, upon their garments white,
These sacred blossoms wear.”

And the mother gave, in tears and pain,
The flowers she most did love;

She knew she should find them all again
In the fields of light above.

Oh, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The Reaper came that day;
'T was an angel visited the green earth,
And took the flowers away.

1839

THE BELEAGUERED CITY

I have read, in some old, marvellous tale,
Some legend strange and vague,
That a midnight host of spectres pale
Beleaguered the walls of Prague.

Beside the Moldau's rushing stream,
With the wan moon overhead,
There stood, as in an awful dream,
The army of the dead.

White as a sea-fog, landward bound,
The spectral camp was seen,
And, with a sorrowful, deep sound,
The river flowed between.

10

No other voice nor sound was there,
No drum, nor sentry's pace;
The mist-like banners clasped the air
As clouds with clouds embrace.

But when the old cathedral bell
Proclaimed the morning prayer,
The white pavilions rose and fell
On the alarmèd air.

20

Down the broad valley fast and far
The troubled army fled;
Up rose the glorious morning star,
The ghastly host was dead.

I have read, in the marvellous heart of man,
That strange and mystic scroll,
That an army of phantoms vast and wan
Beleaguer the human soul.

Encamped beside Life's rushing stream,
In Fancy's misty light, 30
Gigantic shapes and shadows gleam
Portentous through the night.

Upon its midnight battle-ground
The spectral camp is seen,
And, with a sorrowful, deep sound,
Flows the River of Life between.

No other voice nor sound is there,
In the army of the grave;
No other challenge breaks the air,
But the rushing of Life's wave. 40

And when the solemn and deep church-bell
Entreats the soul to pray,
The midnight phantoms feel the spell,
The shadows sweep away.

Down the broad Vale of Tears afar
The spectral camp is fled;
Faith shineth as a morning star,
Our ghastly fears are dead.

BURIAL OF THE MINNISINK

On sunny slope and beechen swell,
The shadowed light of evening fell;
And, where the maple's leaf was brown,
With soft and silent lapse came down,
The glory, that the wood receives,
At sunset, in its golden leaves.

Far upward in the mellow light
Rose the blue hills. One cloud of white,
Around a far uplifted cone,
In the warm blush of evening shone; 10
An image of the silver lakes,
By which the Indian's soul awakes.

But soon a funeral hymn was heard
Where the soft breath of evening stirred
The tall, gray forest; and a band
Of stern in heart, and strong in hand,
Came winding down beside the wave,
To lay the red chief in his grave.

They sang, that by his native bowers
He stood, in the last moon of flowers, 20
And thirty snows had not yet shed
Their glory on the warrior's head;
But, as the summer fruit decays,
So died he in those naked days.

A dark cloak of the roebuck's skin
Covered the warrior, and within
Its heavy folds the weapons, made
For the hard toils of war, were laid;
The cuirass, woven of plaited reeds,
And the broad belt of shells and beads. 30

Before, a dark-haired virgin train
Chanted the death dirge of the slain;
Behind, the long procession came
Of hoary men and chiefs of fame,
With heavy hearts, and eyes of grief,
Leading the war-horse of their chief.

Stripped of his proud and martial dress,
Uncurbed, unreined, and riderless,
With darting eye, and nostril spread,
And heavy and impatient tread,
He came; and oft that eye so proud
Asked for his rider in the crowd.

40

They buried the dark chief; they freed
Beside the grave his battle steed;
And swift an arrow cleaved its way
To his stern heart! One piercing neigh
Arose, and, on the dead man's plain,
The rider grasps his steed again.

1826

THE SKELETON IN ARMOR

"Speak! speak! thou fearful guest!
Who, with thy hollow breast
Still in rude armor drest,
Comest to daunt me!
Wrapt not in Eastern balms,
But with thy fleshless palms
Stretched, as if asking alms,
Why dost thou haunt me?"

Then, from those cavernous eyes
Pale flashes seemed to rise,
As when the Northern skies
Gleam in December;

10

And, like the water's flow
Under December's snow,
Came a dull voice of woe
From the heart's chamber.

"I was a Viking old!
My deeds, though manifold,
No Skald in song has told,
No Saga taught thee!
Take heed, that in thy verse
Thou dost the tale rehearse,
Else dread a dead man's curse;
For this I sought thee.

20

"Far in the Northern Land,
By the wild Baltic's strand,
I, with my childish hand,
Tamed the gerfalcon;
And, with my skates fast-bound,
Skimmed the half-frozen Sound,
That the poor whimpering hound
Trembled to walk on.

30

"Oft to his frozen lair
Tracked I the grisly bear,
While from my path the hare
Fled like a shadow;
Oft through the forest dark
Followed the were-wolf's bark,
Until the soaring lark
Sang from the meadow.

40

"But when I older grew,
Joining a corsair's crew,
O'er the dark sea I flew
With the marauders.
Wild was the life we led;

Many the souls that sped,
Many the hearts that bled,
By our stern orders.

“Many a wassail-bout
Wore the long Winter out; 50
Often our midnight shout
Set the cocks crowing,
As we the Berserk’s tale
Measured in cups of ale,
Draining the oaken pail,
Filled to o’erflowing.

“Once as I told in glee
Tales of the stormy sea,
Soft eyes did gaze on me,
Burning yet tender; 60
And as the white stars shine
On the dark Norway pine,
On that dark heart of mine
Fell their soft splendor.

“I wooed the blue-eyed maid,
Yielding, yet half afraid,
And in the forest’s shade
Our vows were plighted.
Under its loosened vest
Fluttered her little breast, 70
Like birds within their nest
By the hawk frightened.

“Bright in her father’s hall
Shields gleamed upon the wall,
Loud sang the minstrels all,
Chanting his glory;
When of old Hildebrand
I asked his daughter’s hand,

Mute did the minstrels stand
To hear my story.

80

“While the brown ale he quaffed,
Loud then the champion laughed,
And as the wind-gusts waft
The sea-foam brightly,
So the loud laugh of scorn,
Out of those lips unshorn,
From the deep drinking-horn
Blew the foam lightly.

“She was a Prince’s child,
I but a Viking wild,
And though she blushed and smiled,
I was discarded!
Should not the dove so white
Follow the sea-mew’s flight,
Why did they leave that night
Her nest unguarded?

90

“Scarce had I put to sea,
Bearing the maid with me,—
Fairest of all was she
Among the Norsemen!—
When on the white sea-strand,
Waving his armèd hand,
Saw we old Hildebrand,
With twenty horsemen.

100

“Then launched they to the blast,
Bent like a reed each mast,
Yet we were gaining fast,
When the wind failed us;
And with a sudden flaw
Came round the gusty Skaw,
So that our foe we saw
Laugh as he hailed us.

110

“And as to catch the gale
Round veered the flapping sail,
‘Death!’ was the helmsman’s hail,
 ‘Death without quarter!’
Mid-ships with iron keel
Struck we her ribs of steel;
Down her black hulk did reel
 Through the black water!

120

“As with his wings aslant,
Sails the fierce cormorant,
Seeking some rocky haunt,
 With his prey laden,—
So toward the open main,
Beating to sea again,
Through the wild hurricane,
 Bore I the maiden.

“Three weeks we westward bore,
And when the storm was o’er,
Cloud-like we saw the shore
 Stretching to leeward;
There for my lady’s bower
Built I the lofty tower,
Which, to this very hour,
 Stands looking seaward.

130

“There lived we many years;
Time dried the maiden’s tears;
She had forgot her fears,
 She was a mother;
Death closed her mild blue eyes,
Under that tower she lies;
Ne’er shall the sun arise
 On such another!

140

“Still grew my bosom then,
Still as a stagnant fen!

Hateful to me were men,
The sunlight hateful!
In the vast forest here,
Clad in my warlike gear, 150
Fell I upon my spear,
Oh, death was grateful!

“Thus, seamed with many scars,
Bursting these prison bars,
Up to its native stars
My soul ascended!
There from the flowing bowl
Deep drinks the warrior’s soul,
Skoal! to the Northland! *skaal!*”
Thus the tale ended. 160
1841

THE WRECK OF THE HESPERUS

It was the schooner Hesperus,
That sailed the wintry sea;
And the skipper had taken his little daughter,
To bear him company.

Blue were her eyes as the fairy-flax,
Her cheeks like the dawn of day,
And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds,
That ope in the month of May.

The skipper he stood beside the helm,
His pipe was in his mouth, 10
And he watched how the veering flaw did blow
The smoke now West, now South.

Then up and spake an old Sailòr,
Had sailed to the Spanish Main,
“I pray thee, put into yonder port,
For I fear a hurricane.

“Last night, the moon had a golden ring,
And to-night no moon we see!”
The skipper, he blew a whiff from his pipe,
And a scornful laugh laughed he.

20

Colder and louder blew the wind,
A gale from the Northeast,
The snow fell hissing in the brine,
And the billows frothed like yeast.

Down came the storm, and smote amain
The vessel in its strength;
She shuddered and paused, like a frightened steed,
Then leaped her cable's length.

“Come hither! come hither! my little daughtèr,
And do not tremble so;
For I can weather the roughest gale
That ever wind did blow.”

30

He wrapped her warm in his seaman's coat
Against the stinging blast;
He cut a rope from a broken spar,
And bound her to the mast.

“O father! I hear the church-bells ring,
Oh say, what may it be?”
“’Tis a fog-bell on a rock-bound coast!”—
And he steered for the open sea.

40

“O father! I hear the sound of guns,
Oh say, what may it be?”
“Some ship in distress, that cannot live
In such an angry sea!”

“O father! I see a gleaming light,
Oh say, what may it be?”

But the father answered never a word,
A frozen corpse was he.

Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark,
With his face turned to the skies, 50
The lantern gleamed through the gleaming snow
On his fixed and glassy eyes.

Then the maiden clasped her hands and prayed
That savèd she might be;
And she thought of Christ, who stilled the wave,
On the Lake of Galilee.

And fast through the midnight dark and drear,
Through the whistling sleet and snow,
Like a sheeted ghost, the vessel swept
Tow'rds the reef of Norman's Woe. 60

And ever the fitful gusts between
A sound came from the land;
It was the sound of the trampling surf
On the rocks and the hard sea-sand.

The breakers were right beneath her bows,
She drifted a dreary wreck,
And a whooping billow swept the crew
Like icicles from her deck.

She struck where the white and fleecy waves
Looked soft as carded wool, 70
But the cruel rocks, they gored her side
Like the horns of an angry bull.

Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice,
With the masts went by the board;
Like a vessel of glass, she stove and sank,
Ho! ho! the breakers roared!

At daybreak, on the bleak sea-beach,
A fisherman stood aghast,
To see the form of a maiden fair,
Lashed close to a drifting mast. 80

The salt sea was frozen on her breast,
The salt tears in her eyes;
And he saw her hair, like the brown seaweed,
On the billows fall and rise.

Such was the wreck of the Hesperus,
In the midnight and the snow!
Christ save us all from a death like this,
On the reef of Norman's Woe! 1840

THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH

Under a spreading chestnut-tree
The village smithy stands;
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long,
His face is like the tan;
His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can, 10
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man.

Week in, week out, from morn till night,
You can hear his bellows blow;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
With measured beat and slow,
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school
Look in at the open door; 20
They love to see the flaming forge,
And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
Like chaff from a threshing-floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church,
And sits among his boys;
He hears the parson pray and preach,
He hears his daughter's voice,
Singing in the village choir,
And it makes his heart rejoice. 30

It sounds to him like her mother's voice,
Singing in Paradise!
He needs must think of her once more,
How in the grave she lies;
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes
A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling,—rejoicing,—sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes;
Each morning sees some task begin,
Each evening sees it close; 40
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
For the lesson thou hast taught!
Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought;
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought.

THE RAINY DAY

The day is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
The vine still clings to the mouldering wall,
But at every gust the dead leaves fall,
And the day is dark and dreary.

My life is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
My thoughts still cling to the mouldering Past,
But the hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,
And the days are dark and dreary. 10

Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining;
Thy fate is the common fate of all,
Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary. 1841

EXCELSIOR

The shades of night were falling fast,
As through an Alpine village passed
A youth, who bore, 'mid snow and ice,
A banner with the strange device,
Excelsior!

His brow was sad; his eye beneath,
Flashed like a falchion from its sheath,
And like a silver clarion rung
The accents of that unknown tongue,
Excelsior! 10

In happy homes he saw the light
Of household fires gleam warm and bright;

Above, the spectral glaciers shone,
And from his lips escaped a groan,
Excelsior!

"Try not the Pass!" the old man said;
"Dark lowers the tempest overhead,
The roaring torrent is deep and wide!"
And loud that clarion voice replied,
Excelsior!

20

"O stay," the maiden said, "and rest
Thy weary head upon this breast!"
A tear stood in his bright blue eye,
But still he answered, with a sigh,
Excelsior!

"Beware the pine-tree's withered branch!
Beware the awful avalanche!"
This was the peasant's last Good-night,
A voice replied, far up the height,
Excelsior!

30

At break of day, as heavenward
The pious monks of Saint Bernard
Uttered the oft-repeated prayer,
A voice cried through the startled air,
Excelsior!

A traveller, by the faithful hound,
Half-buried in the snow was found,
Still grasping in his hand of ice
That banner with the strange device,
Excelsior!

40

There in the twilight cold and gray,
Lifeless, but beautiful, he lay,
And from the sky, serene and far,
A voice fell, like a falling star,
Excelsior!

1841

THE SLAVE'S DREAM

Beside the ungathered rice he lay,
His sickle in his hand;
His breast was bare, his matted hair
Was buried in the sand.
Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep,
He saw his Native Land.

Wide through the landscape of his dreams
The lordly Niger flowed;
Beneath the palm-trees on the plain
Once more a king he strode; 10
And heard the tinkling caravans
Descend the mountain road.

He saw once more his dark-eyed queen
Among her children stand;
They clasped his neck, they kissed his cheeks,
They held him by the hand!—
A tear burst from the sleeper's lids
And fell into the sand.

And then at furious speed he rode
Along the Niger's bank; 20
His bridle-reins were golden chains,
And, with a martial clank,
At each leap he could feel his scabbard of steel
Smiting his stallion's flank.

Before him, like a blood-red flag,
The bright flamingoes flew;
From morn till night he followed their flight,
O'er plains where the tamarind grew,
Till he saw the roofs of Caffre huts,
And the ocean rose to view. 30

At night he heard the lion roar,
And the hyena scream,
And the river-horse, as he crushed the reeds
Beside some hidden stream;
And it passed, like a glorious roll of drums,
Through the triumph of his dream.

The forests, with their myriad tongues,
Shouted of liberty;
And the Blast of the Desert cried aloud,
With a voice so wild and free,
That he started in his sleep and smiled
At their tempestuous glee.

40

He did not feel the driver's whip,
Nor the burning heat of day;
For Death had illumined the Land of Sleep,
And his lifeless body lay
A worn-out fetter, that the soul
Had broken and thrown away!

1842

THE WARNING

Beware! The Israelite of old, who tore
The lion in his path,—when, poor and blind,
He saw the blessed light of heaven no more,
Shorn of his noble strength and forced to grind
In prison, and at last led forth to be
A pander to Philistine revelry,—

Upon the pillars of the temple laid
His desperate hands, and in its overthrow
Destroyed himself, and with him those **who made**
A cruel mockery of his sightless woe;
The poor, blind Slave, the scoff and jest of all,
Expired, and thousands perished in the fall!

10

There is a poor, blind Samson in this land,
 Shorn of his strength and bound in bonds of steel,
 Who may, in some grim revel, raise his hand,
 And shake the pillars of this Commonweal,
 Till the vast Temple of our liberties
 A shapeless mass of wreck and rubbish lies.

1842

CARILLON

In the ancient town of Bruges,
 In the quaint old Flemish city,
 As the evening shades descended,
 Low and loud and sweetly blended,
 Low at times and loud at times,
 And changing like a poet's rhymes,
 Rang the beautiful wild chimes
 From the Belfry in the market
 Of the ancient town of Bruges.

Then, with deep sonorous clangor 10
 Calmly answering their sweet anger,
 When the wrangling bells had ended,
 Slowly struck the clock eleven,
 And, from out the silent heaven,
 Silence on the town descended.
 Silence, silence everywhere,
 On the earth and in the air,
 Save that footsteps here and there
 Of some burgher home returning,
 By the street lamps faintly burning, 20
 For a moment woke the echoes
 Of the ancient town of Bruges.

But amid my broken slumbers
 Still I heard those magic numbers,
 As they loud proclaimed the flight

And stolen marches of the night;
Till their chimes in sweet collision
Mingled with each wandering vision,
Mingled with the fortune-telling
Gypsy-bands of dreams and fancies, 30
Which amid the waste expanses
Of the silent land of trances
Have their solitary dwelling;
All else seemed asleep in Bruges,
In the quaint old Flemish city.

And I thought how like these chimes
Are the poet's airy rhymes,
All his rhymes and roundelays,
His conceits, and songs, and ditties,
From the belfry of his brain, 40
Scattered downward, though in vain,
On the roofs and stones of cities!
For by night the drowsy ear
Under its curtains cannot hear,
And by day men go their ways,
Hearing the music as they pass,
But deeming it no more, alas!
Than the hollow sound of brass.

Yet perchance a sleepless wight,
Lodging at some humble inn 50
In the narrow lanes of life,
When the dusk and hush of night
Shut out the incessant din
Of daylight and its toil and strife,
May listen with a calm delight
To the poet's melodies,
Till he hears, or dreams he hears,
Intermingled with the song,
Thoughts that he has cherished long;
Hears amid the chime and singing 60

The bells of his own village ringing,
And wakes, and finds his slumberous eyes
Wet with most delicious tears.

Thus dreamed I, as by night I lay
In Bruges, at the Fleur-de-Blé,
Listening with a wild delight
To the chimes that, through the night,
Rang their changes from the Belfry
Of that quaint old Flemish city.

1845

THE BELFRY OF BRUGES

In the market-place of Bruges stands the belfry old and brown;
Thrice consumed and thrice rebuilt, still it watches o'er the
town.

As the summer morn was breaking, on that lofty tower I stood,
And the world threw off the darkness, like the weeds of widow-
hood.

Thick with towns and hamlets studded, and with streams and
vapors gray,
Like a shield embossed with silver, round and vast the land-
scape lay.

At my feet the city slumbered. From its chimneys, here and
there,
Wreaths of snow-white smoke, ascending, vanished, ghost-like,
into air.

Not a sound rose from the city at that early morning hour,
But I heard a heart of iron beating in the ancient tower. 10

From their nests beneath the rafters sang the swallows wild
and high;

And the world, beneath me sleeping, seemed more distant than
the sky.

Then most musical and solemn, bringing back the olden times,
With their strange, unearthly changes rang the melancholy
chimes,

Like the psalms from some old cloister, when the nuns sing in
the choir;
And the great bell tolled among them, like the chanting of a
friar.

Visions of the days departed, shadowy phantoms filled my brain;
They who live in history only seemed to walk the earth again;

All the Foresters of Flanders,—mighty Baldwin Bras de Fer,
Lyderick du Bucq and Cressy, Philip, Guy de Dampierre. 20

I beheld the pageants splendid that adorned those days of old;
Stately dames, like queens attended, knights who bore the Fleece
of Gold;

Lombard and Venetian merchants with deep-laden argosies;
Ministers from twenty nations; more than royal pomp and ease.

I beheld proud Maximilian, kneeling humbly on the ground;
I beheld the gentle Mary, hunting with her hawk and hound;

And her lighted bridal-chamber, where a duke slept with the
queen,
And the armèd guard around them, and the sword unsheathed
between.

I beheld the Flemish weavers, with Namur and Juliers bold,
Marching homeward from the bloody battle of the Spurs of
Gold;

Saw the fight at Minnewater, saw the White Hoods moving
 west,
 Saw great Artevelde victorious scale the Golden Dragon's
 nest.

And again the whiskered Spaniard all the land with terror
 smote;
 And again the wild alarum sounded from the tocsin's throat;

Till the bell of Ghent responded o'er lagoon and dike of sand,
 "I am Roland! I am Roland! there is victory in the land!"

Then the sound of drums aroused me. The awakened city's
 roar
 Chased the phantoms I had summoned back into their graves
 once more.

Hours had passed away like minutes; and, before I was aware,
 Lo! the shadow of the belfry crossed the sun-illumined square. 40
 1842

THE ARSENAL AT SPRINGFIELD

This is the Arsenal. From floor to ceiling,
 Like a huge organ, rise the burnished arms;
 But from their silent pipes no anthem pealing
 Startles the villages with strange alarms.

Ah! what a sound will rise, how wild and dreary,
 When the death-angel touches those swift keys!
 What loud lament and dismal Miserere
 Will mingle with their awful symphonies!

I hear even now the infinite fierce chorus,
 The cries of agony, the endless groan,
 Which, through the ages that have gone before us,
 In long reverberations reach our own.

On helm and harness rings the Saxon hammer,
Through Cimbric forest roars the Norseman's song,
And loud, amid the universal clamor,
O'er distant deserts sounds the Tartar gong.

I hear the Florentine, who from his palace
Wheels out his battle-bell with dreadful din,
And Aztec priests upon their teocallis
Beat the wild war-drums made of serpent's skin; 20

The tumult of each sacked and burning village;
The shout that every prayer for mercy drowns;
The soldiers' revels in the midst of pillage;
The wail of famine in beleaguered towns;

The bursting shell, the gateway wrenched asunder,
The rattling musketry, the clashing blade;
And ever and anon, in tones of thunder,
The diapason of the cannonade.

Is it, O man, with such discordant noises,
With such accursed instruments as these, 30
Thou drownest Nature's sweet and kindly voices,
And jarrest the celestial harmonies?

Were half the power that fills the world with terror,
Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need of arsenals or forts:

The warrior's name would be a name abhorred!
And every nation, that should lift again
Its hand against a brother, on its forehead
Would wear forevermore the curse of Cain! 40

Down the dark future, through long generations,
The echoing sounds grow fainter and then cease;

And like a bell, with solemn, sweet vibrations,
I hear once more the voice of Christ say, "Peace!"

Peace! and no longer from its brazen portals
The blast of War's great organ shakes the skies!
But beautiful as songs of the immortals,
The holy melodies of love arise.

1844

NUREMBERG

In the valley of the Pegnitz, where across broad meadow-lands
Rise the blue Franconian mountains, Nuremberg, the ancient,
stands.

Quaint old town of toil and traffic, quaint old town of art and
song,
Memories haunt thy pointed gables, like the rooks that round
them throng:

Memories of the Middle Ages, when the emperors, rough and
bold,
Had their dwelling in thy castle, time-defying, centuries old;
And thy brave and thrifty burghers boasted, in their uncouth
rhyme,
That their great imperial city stretched its hand through every
clime.

In the court-yard of the castle, bound with many an iron band,
Stands the mighty linden planted by Queen Cunigunde's
hand;

10

On the square the oriel window, where in old heroic days
Sat the poet Melchior singing Kaiser Maximilian's praise.

Everywhere I see around me rise the wondrous world of Art:
Fountains wrought with richest sculpture standing in the com-
mon mart;

And above cathedral doorways saints and bishops carved in
stone,

By a former age commissioned as apostles to our own.

In the church of sainted Sebald sleeps enshrined his holy dust,
And in bronze the Twelve Apostles guard from age to age their
trust;

In the church of sainted Lawrence stands a pix of sculpture
rare,

Like the foamy sheaf of fountains, rising through the painted
air.

20

Here, when Art was still religion, with a simple, reverent heart,
Lived and labored Albrecht Dürer, the Evangelist of Art;

Hence in silence and in sorrow, toiling still with busy hand,
Like an emigrant he wandered, seeking for the Better Land.

Emigravit is the inscription on the tombstone where he lies;
Dead he is not, but departed,—for the artist never dies.

Fairer seems the ancient city, and the sunshine seems more fair,
That he once has trod its pavement, that he once has breathed
its air!

Through these streets so broad and stately, these obscure and
dismal lanes,

Walked of yore the Mastersingers, chanting rude poetic
strains.

30

From remote and sunless suburbs came they to the friendly
guild,

Building nests in Fame's great temple, as in spouts the swallows
build.

As the weaver plied the shuttle, wove he too the mystic rhyme,
And the smith his iron measures hammered to the anvil's
chime;

Thanking God, whose boundless wisdom makes the flowers of
poesy bloom
In the forge's dust and cinders, in the tissues of the loom.

Here Hans Sachs, the cobbler-poet, laureate of the gentle craft,
Wisest of the Twelve Wise Masters, in huge folios sang and
laughed.

But his house is now an ale-house, with a nicely sanded floor,
And a garland in the window, and his face above the door; 40

Painted by some humble artist, as in Adam Puschman's song,
As the old man gray and dove-like, with his great beard white
and long.

And at night the swart mechanic comes to drown his cark and
care,
Quaffing ale from pewter tankards, in the master's antique
chair.

Vanished is the ancient splendor, and before my dreamy eye
Wave these mingled shapes and figures, like a faded tapestry.

Not thy Councils, not thy Kaisers, win for thee the world's
regard;
But thy painter, Albrecht Dürer, and Hans Sachs, thy cobbler-
bard.

Thus, O Nuremberg, a wanderer from a region far away,
As he paced thy streets and court-yards, sang in thought his
careless lay: 50

Gathering from the pavement's crevice, as a floweret of the soil,
The nobility of labor,—the long pedigree of toil.

THE BRIDGE

I stood on the bridge at midnight,
As the clocks were striking the hour,
And the moon rose o'er the city,
Behind the dark church-tower.

I saw her bright reflection
In the waters under me,
Like a golden goblet falling
And sinking into the sea.

And far in the hazy distance
Of that lovely night in June,
The blaze of the flaming furnace
Gleamed redder than the moon.

10

Among the long, black rafters
The wavering shadows lay,
And the current that came from the ocean
Seemed to lift and bear them away;

As, sweeping and eddying through them,
Rose the belated tide,
And, streaming into the moonlight,
The seaweed floated wide.

20

And like those waters rushing
Among the wooden piers,
A flood of thoughts came o'er me
That filled my eyes with tears.

How often, oh, how often,
In the days that had gone by,
I had stood on that bridge at midnight
And gazed on that wave and sky!

How often, oh, how often,
I had wished that the ebbing tide
Would bear me away on its bosom
O'er the ocean wild and wide! 30

For my heart was hot and restless,
And my life was full of care,
And the burden laid upon me
Seemed greater than I could bear.

But now it has fallen from me,
It is buried in the sea;
And only the sorrow of others
Throws its shadow over me. 40

Yet whenever I cross the river
On its bridge with wooden piers,
Like the odor of brine from the ocean
Comes the thought of other years.

And I think how many thousands
Of care-encumbered men,
Each bearing his burden of sorrow,
Have crossed the bridge since then.

I see the long procession
Still passing to and fro, 50
The young heart hot and restless,
And the old subdued and slow!

And forever and forever,
As long as the river flows,
As long as the heart has passions,
As long as life has woes;

The moon and its broken reflection
And its shadows shall appear,

As the symbol of love in heaven,
And its wavering image here.

60
1845

THE DAY IS DONE

The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
That my soul cannot resist:

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

10

Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling,
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of Time.

20

For, like strains of martial music,
Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavor;
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,

As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start;

Who, through long days of labor,
And nights devoid of ease, 30
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice. 40

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares, that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.

1844

AFTERNOON IN FEBRUARY

The day is ending,
The night is descending;
The marsh is frozen,
The river dead.

Through clouds like ashes
The red sun flashes
On village windows
That glimmer red.

The snow recommences;
The buried fences

10

Mark no longer
The road o'er the plain;

While through the meadows,
Like fearful shadows,
Slowly passes
A funeral train.

The bell is pealing,
And every feeling
Within me responds
To the dismal knell;

20

Shadows are trailing,
My heart is bewailing
And tolling within
Like a funeral bell.

1845

THE OLD CLOCK ON THE STAIRS

L'éternité est une pendule, dont le balancier dit et redit sans cesse ces deux mots seulement, dans le silence des tombeaux: "Toujours! jamais! Jamais! toujours!"

JACQUES BRIDAINE.

Somewhat back from the village street
Stands the old-fashioned country-seat.
Across its antique portico
Tall poplar-trees their shadows throw;
And from its station in the hall
An ancient timepiece says to all,—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

Half-way up the stairs it stands,
And points and beckons with its hands
From its case of massive oak,
Like a monk, who, under his cloak,

10

Crosses himself, and sighs, alas!
With sorrowful voice to all who pass,—
“Forever—never!
Never—forever!”

By day its voice is low and light;
But in the silent dead of night,
Distinct as a passing footstep’s fall,
It echoes along the vacant hall, 20
Along the ceiling, along the floor,
And seems to say, at each chamber-door,—
“Forever—never!
Never—forever!”

Through days of sorrow and of mirth,
Through days of death and days of birth,
Through every swift vicissitude
Of changeful time, unchanged it has stood,
And as if, like God, it all things saw,
It calmly repeats those words of awe,— 30
“Forever—never!
Never—forever!”

In that mansion used to be
Free-hearted Hospitality;
His great fires up the chimney roared;
The stranger feasted at his board;
But, like the skeleton at the feast,
That warning timepiece never ceased,—
“Forever—never!
Never—forever!” 40

There groups of merry children played,
There youths and maidens dreaming strayed;
O precious hours! O golden prime,
And affluence of love and time!
Even as a miser counts his gold,

Those hours the ancient timepiece told,—
“Forever—never!
Never—forever!”

From that chamber, clothed in white,
The bride came forth on her wedding night; 50
There, in that silent room below,
The dead lay in his shroud of snow;
And in the hush that followed the prayer,
Was heard the old clock on the stair,—
“Forever—never!
Never—forever!”

All are scattered now and fled,
Some are married, some are dead;
And when I ask, with throbs of pain,
“Ah! when shall they all meet again?” 60
As in the days long since gone by,
The ancient timepiece makes reply,—
“Forever—never!
Never—forever!”

Never here, forever there,
Where all parting, pain, and care,
And death, and time shall disappear,—
Forever there, but never here!
The horologe of Eternity
Sayeth this incessantly,— 70
“Forever—never!
Never—forever!”

1845

THE ARROW AND THE SONG

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
 It fell to earth, I knew not where;
 For who has sight so keen and strong,
 That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak
 I found the arrow, still unbroke; 10
 And the song, from beginning to end,
 I found again in the heart of a friend.

1845

MEZZO CAMMIN

Half of my life is gone, and I have let
 The years slip from me and have not fulfilled
 The aspiration of my youth, to build
 Some tower of song with lofty parapet.
 Not indolence, nor pleasure, nor the fret
 Of restless passions that would not be stilled,
 But sorrow, and a care that almost killed,
 Kept me from what I may accomplish yet;
 Though, half-way up the hill, I see the Past
 Lying beneath me with its sounds and sights,— 10
 A city in the twilight dim and vast,
 With smoking roofs, soft bells, and gleaming
 lights,—
 And hear above me on the autumnal blast
 The cataract of Death far thundering from
 the heights.

Written, August 25, 1842

EVANGELINE

A TALE OF ACADIE

This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the
 hemlocks,
 Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in the
 twilight,

Stand like Druids of eld, with voices sad and prophetic,
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their bosoms.
Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep-voiced neighboring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of the
forest.

This is the forest primeval; but where are the hearts that
beneath it
Leaped like the roe, when he hears in the woodland the voice of
the huntsman?
Where is the thatch-roofed village, the home of Acadian
farmers,—
Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water the wood-
lands,
Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an image of
heaven?
Waste are those pleasant farms, and the farmers forever departed!
Scattered like dust and leaves, when the mighty blasts of
October
Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and sprinkle them far o'er
the ocean.
Naught but tradition remains of the beautiful village of
Grand-Pré.

Ye who believe in affection that hopes, and endures, and
is patient,
Ye who believe in the beauty and strength of woman's devotion,
List to the mournful tradition, still sung by the pines of the
forest;
List to a Tale of Love in Acadie, home of the happy.

PART THE FIRST

I

In the Acadian land, on the shores of the Basin of Minas, 20
Distant, secluded, still, the little village of Grand-Pré
Lay in the fruitful valley. Vast meadows stretched to the
eastward,

Giving the village its name, and pasture to flocks without
number.

Dikes, that the hands of the farmers had raised with labor
incessant,

Shut out the turbulent tides; but at stated seasons the flood-gates
Opened and welcomed the sea to wander at will o'er the
meadows.

West and south there were fields of flax, and orchards and
cornfields

Spreading afar and unfenced o'er the plain; and away to the
northward

Blomidon rose, and the forests old, and aloft on the mountains
Sea-fogs pitched their tents, and mists from the mighty
Atlantic

30

Looked on the happy valley, but ne'er from their station
descended.

There, in the midst of its farms, reposed the Acadian village.
Strongly built were the houses, with frames of oak and of
hemlock,

Such as the peasants of Normandy built in the reign of the
Henries.

Thatched were the roofs, with dormer-windows; and gables
projecting

Over the basement below protected and shaded the doorway.

There in the tranquil evenings of summer, when brightly the
sunset

Lighted the village street and gilded the vanes on the chimneys,
Matrons and maidens sat in snow-white caps and in kirtles
Scarlet and blue and green, with distaffs spinning the golden 40
Flax for the gossiping looms, whose noisy shuttles within doors
Mingled their sound with the whirl of the wheels and the songs
of the maidens.

Solemnly down the street came the parish priest, and the
children

Paused in their play to kiss the hand he extended to bless them.
Reverend walked he among them; and up rose matrons and
maidens,

Hailing his slow approach with words of affectionate welcome.
Then came the laborers home from the field, and serenely the
sun sank

Down to his rest, and twilight prevailed. Anon from the belfry
Softly the Angelus sounded, and over the roofs of the village
Columns of pale blue smoke, like clouds of incense ascending, 50
Rose from a hundred hearths, the homes of peace and contentment.

Thus dwelt together in love these simple Acadian farmers,—
Dwelt in the love of God and of man. Alike were they free
from

Fear, that reigns with the tyrant, and envy, the vice of republics.
Neither locks had they to their doors, nor bars to their windows;
But their dwellings were open as day and the hearts of the
owners;

There the richest was poor, and the poorest lived in abundance.

Somewhat apart from the village, and nearer the Basin of
Minas,

Benedict Bellefontaine, the wealthiest farmer of Grand-Pré,
Dwelt on his goodly acres; and with him, directing his household, 60

Gentle Evangeline lived, his child, and the pride of the village.
Stalworth and stately in form was the man of seventy winters;
Hearty and hale was he, an oak that is covered with snow-flakes;
White as the snow were his locks, and his cheeks as brown as
the oak-leaves.

Fair was she to behold, that maiden of seventeen summers.
Black were her eyes as the berry that grows on the thorn by
the wayside,

Black, yet how softly they gleamed beneath the brown shade of
her tresses!

Sweet was her breath as the breath of kine that feed in the
meadows.

When in the harvest heat she bore to the reapers at noontide
Flagons of home-brewed ale, ah! fair in sooth was the
maiden.

Fairer was she when, on Sunday morn, while the bell from its
turret

Sprinkled with holy sounds the air, as the priest with his hyssop
Sprinkles the congregation, and scatters blessings upon them,
Down the long street she passed, with her chaplet of beads and
her missal,

Wearing her Norman cap, and her kirtle of blue, and the
ear-rings,

Brought in the olden time from France, and since, as an heirloom
Handed down from mother to child, through long generations.
But a celestial brightness—a more ethereal beauty—

Shone on her face and encircled her form, when, after confession,
Homeward serenely she walked with God's benediction upon
her. 80

When she had passed, it seemed like the ceasing of exquisite
music.

Firmly builded with rafters of oak, the house of the farmer
Stood on the side of a hill commanding the sea; and a shady
Sycamore grew by the door, with a woodbine wreathing around
it.

Rudely carved was the porch, with seats beneath; and a foot-
path

Led through an orchard wide, and disappeared in the meadow.
Under the sycamore-tree were hives overhung by a pent-
house,

Such as the traveller sees in regions remote by the roadside,
Built o'er a box for the poor, or the blessed image of Mary.
Farther down, on the slope of the hill, was the well with its
moss-grown 90

Bucket, fastened with iron, and near it a trough for the horses.
Shielding the house from storms, on the north, were the barns
and the farm-yard.

There stood the broad-wheeled wains and the antique ploughs
and the harrows;

There were the folds for the sheep; and there, in his feathered
seraglio,

Strutted the lordly turkey, and crowed the cock, with the
selfsame

Voice that in ages of old had startled the penitent Peter.

Bursting with hay were the barns, themselves a village. In
each one

Far o'er the gable projected a roof of thatch; and a staircase,

Under the sheltering eaves, led up to the odorous corn-loft.

There too the dove-cot stood, with its meek and innocent
inmates 100

Murmuring ever of love; while above in the variant breezes

Numberless noisy weathercocks rattled and sang of mutation.

Thus, at peace with God and the world, the farmer of
Grand-Pré

Lived on his sunny farm, and Evangeline governed his house-
hold.

Many a youth, as he knelt in the church and opened his missal,

Fixed his eyes upon her as the saint of his deepest devotion;

Happy was he who might touch her hand or the hem of her
garment!

Many a suitor came to her door, by the darkness befriended,

And, as he knocked and waited to hear the sound of her foot-
steps,

Knew not which beat the louder, his heart or the knocker
of iron; 110

Or at the joyous feast of the Patron Saint of the village,

Bolder grew, and pressed her hand in the dance as he whispered

Hurried words of love, that seemed a part of the music.

But, among all who came, young Gabriel only was welcome;

Gabriel Lajeunesse, the son of Basil the blacksmith,

Who was a mighty man in the village, and honored of all
men;

For, since the birth of time, throughout all ages and nations,

Has the craft of the smith been held in *repute* by the people.

Basil was Benedict's friend. Their *children* from earliest
childhood

Grew up together as brother and sister; and Father Felician, 120

Priest and pedagogue both in the village, had taught them their letters

Out of the selfsame book, with the hymns of the church and the plain-song.

But when the hymn was sung, and the daily lesson completed, Swiftly they hurried away to the forge of Basil the blacksmith. There at the door they stood, with wondering eyes to behold him Take in his leathern lap the hoof of the horse as a plaything, Nailing the shoe in its place; while near him the tire of the cart-wheel

Lay like a fiery snake, coiled round in a circle of cinders.

Oft on autumnal eves, when without in the gathering darkness Bursting with light seemed the smithy, through every cranny and crevice,

130

Warm by the forge within they watched the laboring bellows, And as its panting ceased, and the sparks expired in the ashes, Merrily laughed, and said they were nuns going into the chapel. Oft on sledges in winter, as swift as the swoop of the eagle, Down the hillside bounding, they glided away o'er the meadow. Oft in the barns they climbed to the populous nests on the rafters, Seeking with eager eyes that wondrous stone, which the swallow Brings from the shore of the sea to restore the sight of its fledglings;

Lucky was he who found that stone in the nest of the swallow! Thus passed a few swift years, and they no longer were children.

140

He was a valiant youth, and his face, like the face of the morning, Gladdened the earth with its light, and ripened thought into action.

She was a woman now, with the heart and hopes of a woman. "Sunshine of Saint Eulalie" was she called; for that was the sunshine

Which, as the farmers believed, would load their orchards with apples;

She, too, would bring to her husband's house delight and abundance,

Filling it full of love and the ruddy faces of children.

II

Now had the season returned, when the nights grow colder
and longer,

And the retreating sun the sign of the Scorpion enters.

Birds of passage sailed through the leaden air, from the ice-
bound, 150

Desolate northern bays to the shores of tropical islands.

Harvests were gathered in; and wild with the winds of Sep-
tember

Wrestled the trees of the forest, as Jacob of old with the angel.

All the signs foretold a winter long and inclement.

Bees, with prophetic instinct of want, had hoarded their honey
Till the hives overflowed; and the Indian hunters asserted
Cold would the winter be, for thick was the fur of the foxes.

Such was the advent of autumn. Then followed that beautiful
season,

Called by the pious Acadian peasants the Summer of All-Saints!

Filled was the air with a dreamy and magical light; and the
landscape 160

Lay as if new-created in all the freshness of childhood.

Peace seemed to reign upon earth, and the restless heart of the
ocean

Was for a moment consoled. All sounds were in harmony
blended.

Voices of children at play, the crowing of cocks in the farm-
yards,

Whir of wings in the drowsy air, and the cooing of pigeons,

All were subdued and low as the murmurs of love, and the
great sun

Looked with the eye of love through the golden vapors around
him;

While arrayed in its robes of russet and scarlet and yellow,

Bright with the sheen of the dew, each glittering tree of the
forest

Flashed like the plane-tree the Persian adorned with mantles
and jewels. 170

Now recommenced the reign of rest and affection and stillness.

Day with its burden and heat had departed, and twilight descending

Brought back the evening star to the sky, and the herds to the homestead.

Pawing the ground they came, and resting their necks on each other,

And with their nostrils distended inhaling the freshness of evening.

Foremost, bearing the bell, Evangeline's beautiful heifer,

Proud of her snow-white hide, and the ribbon that waved from her collar,

Quietly paced and slow, as if conscious of human affection.

Then came the shepherd back with his bleating flocks from the seaside,

Where was their favorite pasture. Behind them followed the watch-dog, 180

Patient, full of importance, and grand in the pride of his instinct,

Walking from side to side with a lordly air, and superbly

Waving his bushy tail, and urging forward the stragglers;

Regent of flocks was he when the shepherd slept; their protector,

When from the forest at night, through the starry silence, the wolves howled.

Late, with the rising moon, returned the wains from the marshes,

Laden with briny hay, that filled the air with its odor.

Cheerily neighed the steeds, with dew on their manes and their fetlocks,

While aloft on their shoulders the wooden and ponderous saddles,

Painted with brilliant dyes, and adorned with tassels of crimson, 190

Nodded in bright array, like hollyhocks heavy with blossoms.

Patiently stood the cows meanwhile, and yielded their udders

Unto the milkmaid's hand; whilst loud and in regular cadence

Into the sounding pails the foaming streamlets descended.

Lowling of cattle and peals of laughter **were** heard in the farm-
yard,
Echoed back by the barns. Anon they sank into stillness;
Heavily closed, with a jarring sound, the valves of the barn-
doors,
Rattled the wooden bars, and all for a season was silent.

In-doors, warm by the wide-mouthed fireplace, idly the
farmer
Sat in his elbow-chair, and watched how the flames and the
smoke-wreaths 200
Struggled together like foes in a burning city. Behind him,
Nodding and mocking along the wall, with gestures fantastic,
Darted his own huge shadow, and vanished away into darkness.
Faces, clumsily carved in oak, on the back of his arm-chair
Laughed in the flickering light; and the pewter plates on the
dresser
Caught and reflected the flame, as shields of armies the sunshine.
Fragments of song the old man sang, and carols of Christmas,
Such as at home, in the olden time, his fathers before him
Sang in their Norman orchards and bright Burgundian vineyards.
Close at her father's side was the gentle Evangeline seated, 210
Spinning flax for the loom, that stood in the corner behind her.
Silent awhile were its treadles, at rest was its diligent shuttle,
While the monotonous drone of the wheel, like the drone of a
bagpipe,
Followed the old man's song and united the fragments together.
As in a church, when the chant of the choir at intervals ceases,
Footfalls are heard in the aisles, or words of the priest at the
altar,
So, in each pause of the song, with measured motion the clock
clicked.

Thus as they sat, there were footsteps heard, and, suddenly
lifted,
Sounded the wooden latch, and the door **swung** back on its
hinges.

Benedict knew by the hob-nailed shoes it was Basil the black-smith,

220

And by her beating heart Evangeline knew who was with him.
“Welcome!” the farmer exclaimed, as their footsteps paused on the threshold,

“Welcome, Basil, my friend! Come, take thy place on the settle
Close by the chimney-side, which is always empty without thee;
Take from the shelf overhead thy pipe and the box of tobacco;
Never so much thyself art thou as when through the curling
Smoke of the pipe or the forge thy friendly and jovial face gleams
Round and red as the harvest moon through the mist of the
marshes.”

Then, with a smile of content, thus answered Basil the black-smith,

Taking with easy air the accustomed seat by the fireside:—

230

“Benedict Bellefontaine, thou hast ever thy jest and thy ballad!
Ever in cheerfullest mood art thou, when others are filled with
Gloomy forebodings of ill, and see only ruin before them.
Happy art thou, as if every day thou hadst picked up a
horseshoe.”

Pausing a moment, to take the pipe that Evangeline brought him,

And with a coal from the embers had lighted, he slowly continued:—

“Four days now are passed since the English ships at their
anchors

Ride in the Gaspereau’s mouth, with their cannon pointed
against us.

What their design may be is unknown; but all are commanded
On the morrow to meet in the church, where his Majesty’s
mandate

240

Will be proclaimed as law in the land. Alas! in the mean time
Many surmises of evil alarm the hearts of the people.”

Then made answer the farmer:—“Perhaps some friendlier
purpose

Brings these ships to our shores. Perhaps the harvests in
England

By untimely rains or untimelier heat have been blighted,
And from our bursting barns they would feed their cattle and
children."

"Not so thinketh the folk in the village," said, warmly, the
blacksmith,

Shaking his head, as in doubt; then, heaving a sigh, he
continued:—

"Louisburg is not forgotten, nor Beau Séjour, nor Port Royal.
Many already have fled to the forest, and lurk on its out-
skirts, 250

Waiting with anxious hearts the dubious fate of to-morrow.
Arms have been taken from us, and warlike weapons of all
kinds;

Nothing is left but the blacksmith's sledge and the scythe of
the mower."

Then with a pleasant smile made answer the jovial farmer:—

"Safer are we unarmed, in the midst of our flocks and our
cornfields,

Safer within these peaceful dikes, besieged by the ocean,
Than our fathers in forts, besieged by the enemy's cannon.
Fear no evil, my friend, and to-night may no shadow of sorrow
Fall on this house and hearth; for this is the night of the contract.
Built are the house and the barn. The merry lads of the
village 260

Strongly have built them and well; and, breaking the glebe
round about them,

Filled the barn with hay, and the house with food for a
twelvemonth.

René Leblanc will be here anon, with his papers and inkhorn.
Shall we not then be glad, and rejoice in the joy of our children?"
As apart by the window she stood, with her hand in her lover's,
Blushing Evangeline heard the words that her father had spoken,
And, as they died on his lips, the worthy notary entered.

III

Bent like a laboring oar, that toils in the surf ~~of the~~ ocean,
Bent, but not broken, by age was the form of ~~the~~ notary public;

Shocks of yellow hair, like the silken floss of the maize, hung 270
Over his shoulders; his forehead was high; and glasses with
horn bows

Sat astride on his nose, with a look of wisdom supernal.
Father of twenty children was he, and more than a hundred
Children's children rode on his knee, and heard his great
watch tick.

Four long years in the times of the war had he languished a
captive,

Suffering much in an old French fort as the friend of the English.
Now, though warier grown, without all guile or suspicion,
Ripe in wisdom was he, but patient, and simple, and childlike.
He was beloved by all, and most of all by the children;
For he told them tales of the Loup-garou in the forest, 280
And of the goblin that came in the night to water the horses,
And of the white Létiche, the ghost of a child who unchristened
Died, and was doomed to haunt unseen the chambers of chil-
dren;

And how on Christmas eve the oxen talked in the stable,
And how the fever was cured by a spider shut up in a nutshell,
And of the marvellous powers of four-leaved clover and
horseshoes,

With whatsoever else was writ in the lore of the village.
Then up rose from his seat by the fireside Basil the blacksmith,
Knocked from his pipe the ashes, and slowly extending his
right hand,

"Father Leblanc," he exclaimed, "thou hast heard the talk in
the village, 290

And, perchance, canst tell us some news of these ships and their
errand."

Then with modest demeanor made answer the notary public,—
"Gossip enough have I heard, in sooth, yet am never the wiser;
And what their errand may be I know not better than others.
Yet am I not of those who imagine some evil intention
Brings them here, for we are at peace; and why then molest us?"
"God's name!" shouted the hasty and somewhat irascible
blacksmith;

"Must we in all things look for the how, and the why, and the wherefore?"

Daily injustice is done, and might is the right of the strongest!"
But, without heeding his warmth, continued the notary public,— 300

"Man is unjust, but God is just; and finally justice Triumphs; and well I remember a story, that often consoled me, When as a captive I lay in the old French fort at Port Royal." This was the old man's favorite tale, and he loved to repeat it When his neighbors complained that any injustice was done them.

"Once in an ancient city, whose name I no longer remember, Raised aloft on a column, a brazen statue of Justice Stood in the public square, upholding the scales in its left hand, And in its right a sword, as an emblem that justice presided Over the laws of the land, and the hearts and homes of the people. 310

Even the birds had built their nests in the scales of the balance, Having no fear of the sword that flashed in the sunshine above them.

But in the course of time the laws of the land were corrupted; Might took the place of right, and the weak were oppressed, and the mighty

Ruled with an iron rod. Then it chanced in a nobleman's palace That a necklace of pearls was lost, and ere long a suspicion Fell on an orphan girl who lived as maid in the household. She, after form of trial condemned to die on the scaffold, Patiently met her doom at the foot of the statue of Justice.

As to her Father in heaven her innocent spirit ascended, 320
Lo! o'er the city a tempest rose; and the bolts of the thunder Smote the statue of bronze, and hurled in wrath from its left hand

Down on the pavement below the clattering scales of the balance, And in the hollow thereof was found the nest of a magpie, Into whose clay-built walls the necklace of pearls was inwoven." Silenced, but not convinced, when the story was ended, the blacksmith

Stood like a man who fain would speak, but findeth no language;
All his thoughts were congealed into lines on his face, as the
vapors
Freeze in fantastic shapes on the window-panes in the winter.

Then Evangeline lighted the brazen lamp on the table, 330
Filled, till it overflowed, the pewter tankard with home-brewed
Nut-brown ale, that was famed for its strength in the village of
Grand-Pré;

While from his pocket the notary drew his papers and inkhorn,
Wrote with a steady hand the date and the age of the parties,
Naming the dower of the bride in flocks of sheep and in cattle.
Orderly all things proceeded, and duly and well were completed,
And the great seal of the law was set like a sun on the margin.
Then from his leathern pouch the farmer threw on the table
Three times the old man's fee in solid pieces of silver;
And the notary rising, and blessing the bride and the bride-
groom, 340

Lifted aloft the tankard of ale and drank to their welfare.
Wiping the foam from his lip, he solemnly bowed and departed,
While in silence the others sat and mused by the fireside,
Till Evangeline brought the draught-board out of its corner.
Soon was the game begun. In friendly contention the old men
Laughed at each lucky hit, or unsuccessful manœuvre,
Laughed when a man was crowned, or a breach was made in
the king-row.

Meanwhile apart, in the twilight gloom of a window's embrasure,
Sat the lovers, and whispered together, beholding the moon rise
Over the pallid sea, and the silvery mist of the meadows. 350
Silently one by one, in the infinite meadows of heaven,
Blossomed the lovely stars, the forget-me-nots of the angels.

Thus was the evening passed. Anon the bell from the belfry
Rang out the hour of nine, the village curfew, and straightway
Rose the guests and departed; and silence reigned in the
household.

Many a farewell word and sweet good-night on the door-step

Lingered long in Evangeline's heart, and filled it with gladness.
Carefully then were covered the embers that glowed on the
hearth-stone,

And on the oaken stairs resounded the tread of the farmer.

Soon with a soundless step the foot of Evangeline followed. 360

Up the staircase moved a luminous space in the darkness,

Lighted less by the lamp than the shining face of the maiden.

Silent she passed the hall, and entered the door of her chamber.

Simple that chamber was, with its curtains of white, and its
clothes-press

Ample and high, on whose spacious shelves were carefully
folded

Linen and woollen stuffs, by the hand of Evangeline woven.

This was the precious dower she would bring to her husband
in marriage,

Better than flocks and herds, being proofs of her skill as a
housewife.

Soon she extinguished her lamp, for the mellow and radiant
moonlight

Streamed through the windows, and lighted the room, till the
heart of the maiden 370

Swelled and obeyed its power, like the tremulous tides of the
ocean.

Ah! she was fair, exceeding fair to behold, as she stood with

Naked snow-white feet on the gleaming floor of her chamber!

Little she dreamed that below, among the trees of the orchard,

Waited her lover and watched for the gleam of her lamp and
her shadow.

Yet were her thoughts of him, and at times a feeling of sadness
Passed o'er her soul, as the sailing shade of clouds in the
moonlight

Flitted across the floor and darkened the room for a moment.

And, as she gazed from the window, she saw serenely the moon
pass

Forth from the folds of a cloud, and one star follow her
footsteps, 380

As out of Abraham's tent young Ishmael wandered with Hagar!

IV

Pleasantly rose next morn the sun on the village of Grand-Pré.
Pleasantly gleamed in the soft, sweet air the Basin of Minas,
Where the ships, with their wavering shadows, were riding
at anchor.

Life had long been astir in the village, and clamorous labor
Knocked with its hundred hands at the golden gates of the
morning.

Now from the country around, from the farms and neighbor-
ing hamlets,

Came in their holiday dresses the blithe Acadian peasants.
Many a glad good-morrow and jocund laugh from the young
folk

Made the bright air brighter, as up from the numerous
meadows, 390

Where no path could be seen but the track of wheels in the
greensward,

Group after group appeared, and joined, or passed on the
highway.

Long ere noon, in the village all sounds of labor were si-
lenced.

Thronged were the streets with people; and noisy groups at
the house-doors

Sat in the cheerful sun, and rejoiced and gossiped together.

Every house was an inn, where all were welcomed and feasted;
For with this simple people, who lived like brothers together,
All things were held in common, and what one had was
another's.

Yet under Benedict's roof hospitality seemed more abundant:
For Evangeline stood among the guests of her father; 400
Bright was her face with smiles, and words of welcome and
gladness

Fell from her beautiful lips, and blessed the cup as she gave it.

Under the open sky, in the odorous air of the orchard,
Stript of its golden fruit, was spread the feast of betrothal.

There in the shade of the porch were the priest and the notary
seated;

There good Benedict sat, and sturdy Basil the blacksmith.

Not far withdrawn from these, by the cider-press and the
beehives,

Michael the fiddler was placed, with the gayest of hearts and
of waistcoats.

Shadow and light from the leaves alternately played on his
snow-white

Hair, as it waved in the wind; and the jolly face of the fiddler 410

Glowed like a living coal when the ashes are blown from
the embers.

Gayly the old man sang to the vibrant sound of his fiddle,
Tous les Bourgeois de Chartres, and *Le Carillon de Dunkerque*,
And anon with his wooden shoes beat time to the music.

Merrily, merrily whirled the wheels of the dizzying dances
Under the orchard-trees and down the path to the meadows;
Old folk and young together, and children mingled among them.
Fairest of all the maids was Evangeline, Benedict's daughter!
Noblest of all the youths was Gabriel, son of the blacksmith!

So passed the morning away. And lo! with a summons
sonorous 420

Sounded the bell from its tower, and over the meadows a
drum beat.

Thronged ere long was the church with men. Without, in the
churchyard,

Waited the women. They stood by the graves, and hung on
the headstones

Garlands of autumn-leaves and evergreens fresh from the forest.
Then came the guard from the ships, and marching proudly
among them

Entered the sacred portal. With loud and dissonant clangor
Echoed the sound of their brazen drums from ceiling and
casement,—

Echoed a moment only, and slowly the ponderous portal
Closed, and in silence the crowd awaited the will of the soldiers.

Then uprose their commander, and spake from the steps of
the altar, 430

Holding aloft in his hands, with its seals, the royal commission.
"You are convened this day," he said, "by his Majesty's orders.
Clement and kind has he been; but how you have answered
his kindness,

Let your own hearts reply! To my natural make and my temper
Painful the task is I do, which to you I know must be grievous.
Yet must I bow and obey, and deliver the will of our monarch;
Namely, that all your lands, and dwellings, and cattle of all kinds
Forfeited be to the crown; and that you yourselves from this
province

Be transported to other lands. God grant you may dwell there
Ever as faithful subjects, a happy and peaceable people! 440

Prisoners now I declare you; for such is his Majesty's pleasure!"
As, when the air is serene in the sultry solstice of summer,
Suddenly gathers a storm, and the deadly sling of the hailstones
Beats down the farmer's corn in the field and shatters his
windows,

Hiding the sun, and strewing the ground with thatch from the
house-roofs,

Bellowing fly the herds, and seek to break their enclosures;
So on the hearts of the people descended the words of the
speaker.

Silent a moment they stood in speechless wonder, and then rose
Louder and ever louder a wail of sorrow and anger,
And, by one impulse moved, they madly rushed to the door-
way. 450

Vain was the hope of escape; and cries and fierce imprecations
Rang through the house of prayer; and high o'er the heads of
the others

Rose, with his arms uplifted, the figure of Basil the blacksmith,
As, on a stormy sea, a spar is tossed by the billows.

Flushed was his face and distorted with passion; and wildly
he shouted,—

"Down with the tyrants of England! we never have sworn
them allegiance!

Death to these foreign soldiers, who seize on our homes and
our harvests!"

More he fain would have said, but the merciless hand of a soldier
Smote him upon the mouth, and dragged him down to the
pavement.

In the midst of the strife and tumult of angry contention, 460
Lo! the door of the chancel opened, and Father Felician
Entered, with serious mien, and ascended the steps of the altar.
Raising his reverend hand, with a gesture he awed into silence
All that clamorous throng; and thus he spake to his people;
Deep were his tones and solemn; in accents measured and
mournful

Spake he, as, after the tocsin's alarum, distinctly the clock strikes.
"What is this that ye do, my children? what madness has
seized you?

Forty years of my life have I labored among you, and taught
you,

Not in word alone, but in deed, to love one another!

Is this the fruit of my toils, of my vigils and prayers and
privations? 470

Have you so soon forgotten all lessons of love and forgiveness?
This is the house of the Prince of Peace, and would you
profane it

Thus with violent deeds and hearts overflowing with hatred?

Lo! where the crucified Christ from his cross is gazing upon
you!

See! in those sorrowful eyes what meekness and holy com-
passion!

Hark! how those lips still repeat the prayer, 'O Father, forgive
them!'

Let us repeat that prayer in the hour when the wicked assail us,
Let us repeat it now, and say, 'O Father, forgive them!'

Few were his words of rebuke, but deep in the hearts of his
people

Sank they, and sobs of contrition succeeded the passionate
outbreak, 480

While they repeated his prayer, and said, "O Father, forgive them!"

Then came the evening service. The tapers gleamed from the altar.

Fervent and deep was the voice of the priest, and the people responded,

Not with their lips alone, but their hearts; and the Ave Maria Sang they, and fell on their knees, and their souls, with devotion translated,

Rose on the ardor of prayer, like Elijah ascending to heaven.

Meanwhile had spread in the village the tidings of ill, and on all sides

Wandered, wailing, from house to house the women and children.

Long at her father's door Evangeline stood, with her right hand Shielding her eyes from the level rays of the sun, that, descending,

Lighted the village street with mysterious splendor, and roofed each

Peasant's cottage with golden thatch, and emblazoned its windows.

Long within had been spread the snow-white cloth on the table; There stood the wheaten loaf, and the honey fragrant with wild-flowers;

There stood the tankard of ale, and the cheese fresh brought from the dairy;

And, at the head of the board, the great arm-chair of the farmer. Thus did Evangeline wait at her father's door, as the sunset Threw the long shadows of trees o'er the broad ambrosial meadows.

Ah! on her spirit within a deeper shadow had fallen, And from the fields of her soul a fragrance celestial ascended,— Charity, meekness, love, and hope, and forgiveness, and patience!

Then, all-forgotful of self, she wandered into the village,

Cheering with looks and words the mournful hearts of the
women,

As o'er the darkening fields with lingering steps they departed,
Urged by their household cares, and the weary feet of their
children.

Down sank the great red sun, and in golden, glimmering vapors
Veiled the light of his face, like the Prophet descending from
Sinai.

Sweetly over the village the bell of the Angelus sounded. 508

Meanwhile, amid the gloom, by the church *Evangeline* lingered.
All was silent within; and in vain at the door and the windows
Stood she, and listened and looked, till, overcome by emotion,
"Gabriel!" cried she aloud with tremulous voice; but no answer
Came from the graves of the dead, nor the gloomier grave of
the living.

Slowly at length she returned to the tenantless house of her
father.

Smouldered the fire on the hearth, on the board was the supper
untasted,

Empty and drear was each room, and haunted with phantoms
of terror.

Sadly echoed her step on the stair and the floor of her chamber.
In the dead of the night she heard the disconsolate rain fall
Loud on the withered leaves of the sycamore-tree by the
window.

Keenly the lightning flashed; and the voice of the echoing
thunder

520

Told her that God was in heaven, and governed the world
he created!

Then she remembered the tale she had heard of the justice
of Heaven;

Soothed was her troubled soul, and she peacefully slumbered
till morning.

V

Four times the sun had risen and set; and now on the fifth day
Cheerily called the cock to the sleeping maids of the farm-house.

Soon o'er the yellow fields, in silent and mournful procession,
Came from the neighboring hamlets and farms the Acadian
women,

Driving in ponderous wains their household goods to the
sea-shore,

Pausing and looking back to gaze once more on their dwellings,
Ere they were shut from sight by the winding road and the
woodland. 530

Close at their sides their children ran, and urged on the oxen,
While in their little hands they clasped some fragments of
playthings.

Thus to the Gaspereau's mouth they hurried; and there on
the sea-beach

Piled in confusion lay the household goods of the peasants.

All day long between the shore and the ships did the boats
ply;

All day long the wains came laboring down from the village.

Late in the afternoon, when the sun was near to his setting,
Echoed far o'er the fields came the roll of drums from the
churchyard.

Thither the women and children thronged. On a sudden the
church-doors

Opened, and forth came the guard, and marching in gloomy
procession 540

Followed the long-imprisoned, but patient, Acadian farmers.

Even as pilgrims, who journey afar from their homes and their
country,

Sing as they go, and in singing forget they are weary and
wayworn,

So with songs on their lips the Acadian peasants descended
Down from the church to the shore, amid their wives and
their daughters.

Foremost the young men came; and, raising together their
voices,

Sang with tremulous lips a chant of the Catholic Missions:—

“Sacred heart of the Saviour! O inexhaustible fountain!

Fill our hearts this day with strength and submission and
patience!"

Then the old men, as they marched, and the women that stood
by the wayside 550

Joined in the sacred psalm, and the birds in the sunshine above
them

Mingled their notes therewith, like voices of spirits departed.

Half-way down to the shore Evangeline waited in silence,
Not overcome with grief, but strong in the hour of affliction,—
Calmly and sadly she waited, until the procession approached
her,

And she beheld the face of Gabriel pale with emotion.

Tears then filled her eyes, and, eagerly running to meet him,
Clasped she his hands, and laid her head on his shoulder,
and whispered,—

"Gabriel! be of good cheer! for if we love one another
Nothing, in truth, can harm us, whatever mischances may
happen!" 560

Smiling she spake these words; then suddenly paused, for her
father

Saw she slowly advancing. Alas! how changed was his aspect!
Gone was the glow from his cheek, and the fire from his eye,
and his footstep

Heavier seemed with the weight of the heavy heart in his bosom.
But with a smile and a sigh, she clasped his neck and embraced
him,

Speaking words of endearment where words of comfort
availed not.

Thus to the Gaspereau's mouth moved on that mournful
procession.

There disorder prevailed, and the tumult and stir of
embarking.

Busily plied the freighted boats; and in the confusion
Wives were torn from their husbands, and mothers, too late,
saw their children 570

Left on the land, extending their arms, with wildest entreaties.
So unto separate ships were Basil and Gabriel carried,
While in despair on the shore Evangeline stood with her father.
Half the task was not done when the sun went down, and the
twilight

Deepened and darkened around; and in haste the reflux ocean
Fled away from the shore, and left the line of the sand-beach
Covered with waifs of the tide, with kelp and the slippery
sea-weed.

Farther back in the midst of the household goods and the
wagons,

Like to a gypsy camp, or a leaguer after a battle,
All escape cut off by the sea, and the sentinels near them, 580
Lay encamped for the night the houseless Acadian farmers.
Back to its nethermost caves retreated the bellowing ocean,
Dragging adown the beach the rattling pebbles, and leaving
Inland and far up the shore the stranded boats of the sailors.
Then, as the night descended, the herds returned from their
pastures;

Sweet was the moist still air with the odor of milk from their
udders;

Lowing they waited, and long, at the well-known bars of the
farm-yard,—

Waited and looked in vain for the voice and the hand of the
milkmaid.

Silence reigned in the streets; from the church no Angelus
sounded,

Rose no smoke from the roofs, and gleamed no lights from
the windows. 590

But on the shores meanwhile the evening fires had been
kindled,

Built of the drift-wood thrown on the sands from wrecks in
the tempest.

Round them shapes of gloom and sorrowful faces were gathered,
Voices of women were heard, and of men, and the crying of
children.

Onward from fire to fire, as from hearth to hearth in his parish,
Wandered the faithful priest, consoling and blessing and
cheering,

Like unto shipwrecked Paul on Melita's desolate sea-shore.
Thus he approached the place where Evangeline sat with her
father,

And in the flickering light beheld the face of the old man,
Haggard and hollow and wan, and without either thought or
emotion, 600

E'en as the face of a clock from which the hands have been
taken.

Vainly Evangeline strove with words and caresses to cheer
him,

Vainly offered him food; yet he moved not, he looked not, he
spoke not,

But, with a vacant stare, ever gazed at the flickering fire-light.
"Benedicite!" murmured the priest, in tones of compassion.

More he fain would have said, but his heart was full, and his
accents

Faltered and paused on his lips, as the feet of a child on a
threshold,

Hushed by the scene he beholds, and the awful presence of
sorrow.

Silently, therefore, he laid his hand on the head of the maiden,
Raising his tearful eyes to the silent stars that above them 610

Moved on their way, unperturbed by the wrongs and sorrows
of mortals.

Then sat he down at her side, and they wept together in silence.

Suddenly rose from the south a light, as in autumn the blood-
red

Moon climbs the crystal walls of heaven, and o'er the horizon
Titan-like stretches its hundred hands upon mountain and
meadow,

Seizing the rocks and the rivers, and piling huge shadows
together.

Broader and ever broader it gleamed on the roofs of the village,

Gleamed on the sky and the sea, and the ships that lay in the
roadstead.

Columns of shining smoke uprose, and flashes of flame were
Thrust through their folds and withdrawn, like the quivering
hands of a martyr. 620

Then as the wind seized the gleeds and the burning thatch, and,
uplifting,

Whirled them aloft through the air, at once from a hundred
house-tops

Started the sheeted smoke with flashes of flame intermingled.

These things beheld in dismay the crowd on the shore and
on shipboard.

Speechless at first they stood, then cried aloud in their anguish,
"We shall behold no more our homes in the village of Grand-
Pré!"

Loud on a sudden the cocks began to crow in the farm-yards,
Thinking the day had dawned; and anon the lowing of cattle
Came on the evening breeze, by the barking of dogs interrupted.
Then rose a sound of dread, such as startles the sleeping
encampments 630

Far in the western prairies or forests that skirt the Nebraska,
When the wild horses affrighted sweep by with the speed of the
whirlwind,

Or the loud bellowing herds of buffaloes rush to the river.

Such was the sound that arose on the night, as the herds and
the horses

Broke through their folds and fences, and madly rushed o'er
the meadows.

Overwhelmed with the sight, yet speechless, the priest and
the maiden

Gazed on the scene of terror that reddened and widened before
them;

And as they turned at length to speak to their silent companion,
Lo! from his seat he had fallen, and stretched abroad on the
sea shore

Motionless lay his form, from which the soul **had** departed. 640
Slowly the priest uplifted the lifeless head, and the maiden
Knelt at her father's side, and wailed aloud in her terror.
Then in a swoon she sank, and lay with her head on his bosom.
Through the long night she lay in deep, oblivious slumber;
And when she woke from the trance, she beheld a multitude
near her.

Faces of friends she beheld, that were mournfully gazing upon
her,

Pallid, with tearful eyes, and looks of saddest compassion.
Still the blaze of the burning village illumined the landscape,
Reddened the sky overhead, and gleamed on the faces around
her,

And like the day of doom it seemed to her wavering senses. 650
Then a familiar voice she heard, as it said to the people,—
“Let us bury him here by the sea. When a happier season
Brings us again to our homes from the unknown land of our
exile,

Then shall his sacred dust be piously laid in the churchyard.”
Such were the words of the priest. And there in haste by the
sea-side,

Having the glare of the burning village for funeral torches,
But without bell or book, they buried the farmer of Grand-Pré.
And as the voice of the priest repeated the service of sorrow,
Lo! with a mournful sound, like the voice of a vast congreg-
ation,

Solemnly answered the sea, and mingled its roar with the
dirges. 660

'T was the returning tide, that afar from the waste of the ocean,
With the first dawn of the day, came heaving and hurrying
landward.

Then recommenced once more the stir and noise of embarking;
And with the ebb of the tide the ships sailed out of the harbor,
Leaving behind them the dead on the shore, and the village in
ruins.

PART THE SECOND

I

Many a weary year had passed since the burning of Grand-Pré,
When on the falling tide the freighted vessels departed,
Bearing a nation, with all its household gods, into exile,
Exile without an end, and without an example in story.

Far asunder, on separate coasts, the Acadians landed; 670
Scattered were they, like flakes of snow, when the wind from
the northeast

Strikes aslant through the fogs that darken the Banks of New-
foundland.

Friendless, homeless, hopeless, they wandered from city to
city,

From the cold lakes of the North to sultry Southern savannas,—
From the bleak shores of the sea to the lands where the Father
of Waters

Seizes the hills in his hands, and drags them down to the ocean,
Deep in their sands to bury the scattered bones of the mammoth.
Friends they sought and homes; and many, despairing, heart-
broken,

Asked of the earth but a grave, and no longer a friend nor a
fireside.

Written their history stands on tablets of stone in the church-
yards. 680

Long among them was seen a maiden who waited and wan-
dered,

Lowly and meek in spirit, and patiently suffering all things.

Fair was she and young: but, alas! before her extended,

Dreary and vast and silent, the desert of life, with its pathway
Marked by the graves of those who had sorrowed and suffered
before her,

Passions long extinguished, and hopes long dead and aban-
doned,

As the emigrant's way o'er the Western desert is marked by
Camp-fires long consumed, and bones that bleach in the sun-
shine.

Something there was in her life incomplete, imperfect, unfinished;

As if a morning of June, with all its music and sunshine, 690
Suddenly paused in the sky, and, fading, slowly descended
Into the east again, from whence it late had arisen.

Sometimes she lingered in towns, till, urged by the fever within her,

Urged by a restless longing, the hunger and thirst of the spirit,
She would commence again her endless search and endeavor;
Sometimes in churchyards strayed, and gazed on the crosses
and tombstones,

Sat by some nameless grave, and thought that perhaps in its bosom

He was already at rest, and she longed to slumber beside him.

Sometimes a rumor, a hearsay, an inarticulate whisper,

Came with its airy hand to point and beckon her forward. 700

Sometimes she spake with those who had seen her beloved and known him,

But it was long ago, in some far-off place or forgotten.

"Gabriel Lajeunesse!" they said; "O yes! we have seen him.

He was with Basil the blacksmith, and both have gone to the prairies;

Coueurs-des-Bois are they, and famous hunters and trappers."

"Gabriel Lajeunesse!" said others; "O yes! we have seen him.

He is a Voyageur in the lowlands of Louisiana."

Then would they say, "Dear child! why dream and wait for him longer?

Are there not other youths as fair as Gabriel? others

Who have hearts as tender and true, and spirits as loyal? 710

Here is Baptiste Leblanc, the notary's son, who has loved thee

Many a tedious year; come, give him thy hand and be happy!

Thou art too fair to be left to braid St. Catherine's tresses."

Then would Evangeline answer, serenely but sadly, "I cannot!

Whither my heart has gone, there follows my hand, and not elsewhere.

For when the heart goes before, like a lamp, and illumines the pathway,

Many things are made clear, that else lie hidden in darkness."

Thereupon the priest, her friend and father-confessor,
Said, with a smile, "O daughter! thy God thus speaketh within
thee!

Talk not of wasted affection, affection never was wasted; 720
If it enrich not the heart of another, its waters, returning
Back to their springs, like the rain, shall fill them full of refresh-
ment;

That which the fountain sends forth returns again to the
fountain.

Patience; accomplish thy labor; accomplish thy work of affec-
tion!

Sorrow and silence are strong, and patient endurance is god-
like.

Therefore accomplish thy labor of love, till the heart is made
godlike,

Purified, strengthened, perfected, and rendered more worthy
of heaven!"

Cheered by the good man's words, Evangeline labored and
waited.

Still in her heart she heard the funeral dirge of the ocean,
But with its sound there was mingled a voice that whispered,
"Despair not!" 730

Thus did that poor soul wander in want and cheerless dis-
comfort,

Bleeding, barefooted, over the shards and thorns of existence.

Let me essay, O Muse! to follow the wanderer's footsteps;—
Not through each devious path, each changeful year of existence,
But as a traveller follows a streamlet's course through the
valley:

Far from its margin at times, and seeing the gleam of its water
Here and there, in some open space, and at intervals only;

Then drawing nearer its banks, through sylvan glooms that
conceal it,

Though he behold it not, he can hear its continuous murmur;
Happy, at length, if he find the spot where it reaches an out-
let.

II

It was the month of May. Far down the Beautiful River,
Past the Ohio shore and past the mouth of the Wabash,
Into the golden stream of the broad and swift Mississippi,
Floated a cumbrous boat, that was rowed by Acadian boatmen.
It was a band of exiles: a raft, as it were, from the shipwrecked
Nation, scattered along the coast, now floating together,
Bound by the bonds of a common belief and a common mis-
fortune;

Men and women and children, who, guided by hope or by
hearsay,

Sought for their kith and their kin among the few-acred farmers
On the Acadian coast, and the prairies of fair Opelousas. 750
With them Evangeline went, and her guide, the Father Felician.
Onward o'er sunken sands, through a wilderness sombre with
forests,

Day after day they glided adown the turbulent river;
Night after night, by their blazing fires, encamped on its borders.
Now through rushing chutes, among green islands, where
plumelike

Cotton-trees nodded their shadowy crests, they swept with
the current,

Then emerged into broad lagoons, where silvery sand-bars
Lay in the stream, and along the wimpling waves of their
margin,

Shining with snow-white plumes, large flocks of pelicans waded.
Level the landscape grew, and along the shores of the river, 760
Shaded by china-trees, in the midst of luxuriant gardens,
Stood the houses of planters, with negro-cabins and dove-cots.
They were approaching the region where reigns perpetual
summer,

Where through the Golden Coast, and groves of orange and
citron,

Sweeps with majestic curve the river away to the eastward.
They, too, swerved from their course; and entering the Bayou
of Plaquemine,

Soon were lost in a maze of sluggish and devious waters,
Which, like a network of steel, extended in every direction.
Over their heads the towering and tenebrous boughs of the
cypress

Met in a dusky arch, and trailing mosses in mid-air 770

Waved like banners that hang on the walls of ancient cathedrals.
Deathlike the silence seemed, and unbroken, save by the herons
Home to their roosts in the cedar-trees returning at sunset,
Or by the owl, as he greeted the moon with demoniac laughter.
Lovely the moonlight was as it glanced and gleamed on the
water,

Gleamed on the columns of cypress and cedar sustaining the
arches,

Down through whose broken vaults it fell as through chinks
in a ruin.

Dreamlike, and indistinct, and strange were all things around
them;

And o'er their spirits there came a feeling of wonder and sad-
ness,—

Strange forebodings of ill, unseen and that cannot be com-
passed. 780

As, at the tramp of a horse's hoof on the turf of the prairies,
Far in advance are closed the leaves of the shrinking mimosa,
So, at the hoof-beats of fate, with sad forebodings of evil,
Shrinks and closes the heart, ere the stroke of doom has attained
it.

But Evangeline's heart was sustained by a vision, that faintly
Floated before her eyes, and beckoned her on through the
moonlight.

It was the thought of her brain that assumed the shape of a
phantom.

Through those shadowy aisles had Gabriel wandered before her,
And every stroke of the oar now brought him nearer and
nearer.

Then in his place, at the prow of the boat, rose one of the
oarsmen, 790

And, as a signal sound, if others like them peradventure
Sailed on those gloomy and midnight streams, blew a blast on
his bugle.

Wild through the dark colonnades and corridors leafy the
blast rang,

Breaking the seal of silence, and giving tongues to the forest.
Soundless above them the banners of moss just stirred to the
music.

Multitudinous echoes awoke and died in the distance,
Over the watery floor, and beneath the reverberant branches;
But not a voice replied; no answer came from the darkness;
And, when the echoes had ceased, like a sense of pain was the
silence.

Then Evangeline slept; but the boatmen rowed through the
midnight, 800

Silent at times, then singing familiar Canadian boat-songs,
Such as they sang of old on their own Acadian rivers,
While through the night were heard the mysterious sounds of
the desert,

Far off,—indistinct,—as of wave or wind in the forest,
Mixed with the whoop of the crane and the roar of the grim
alligator.

Thus ere another noon they emerged from the shades; and
before them

Lay, in the golden sun, the lakes of the Atchafalaya.

Water-lilies in myriads rocked on the slight undulations
Made by the passing oars, and, resplendent in beauty, the
lotus

Lifted her golden crown above the heads of the boatmen. 810
Faint was the air with the odorous breath of magnolia blossoms,
And with the heat of noon; and numberless sylvan islands,
Fragrant and thickly embowered with blossoming hedges of
roses,

Near to whose shores they glided along, invited to slumber.
Soon by the fairest of these their weary oars were suspended.
Under the boughs of Wachita willows, that grew by the margin,

Safely their boat was moored; and scattered about on the
greensward,

Tired with their midnight toil, the weary travellers slumbered.
Over them vast and high extended the cope of a cedar.

Swinging from its great arms, the trumpet-flower and the
grapevine 820

Hung their ladder of ropes aloft like the ladder of Jacob,
On whose pendulous stairs the angels ascending, descending,
Were the swift humming-birds, that flitted from blossom to
blossom.

Such was the vision Evangeline saw as she slumbered beneath
it.

Filled was her heart with love, and the dawn of an opening
heaven

Lighted her soul in sleep with the glory of regions celestial.

Nearer, and ever nearer, among the numberless islands,
Darted a light, swift boat, that sped away o'er the water,
Urged on its course by the sinewy arms of hunters and trappers.
Northward its prow was turned, to the land of the bison and
beaver. 830

At the helm sat a youth, with countenance thoughtful and
careworn.

Dark and neglected locks overshadowed his brow, and a
sadness

Somewhat beyond his years on his face was legibly written.
Gabriel was it, who, weary with waiting, unhappy and restless,
Sought in the Western wilds oblivion of self and of sorrow.
Swiftly they glided along, close under the lee of the island,
But by the opposite bank, and behind a screen of palmettos,
So that they saw not the boat, where it lay concealed in the
willows;

All undisturbed by the dash of their oars, and unseen, were the
sleepers.

Angel of God was there none to awaken the slumbering
maiden. 840

Swiftly they glided away, like the shade of a cloud on the prairie.

After the sound of their oars on the tholes had died in the distance,

As from a magic trance the sleepers awoke, and the maiden
Said with a sigh to the friendly priest, "O Father Felician!
Something says in my heart that near me Gabriel wanders.
Is it a foolish dream, an idle and vague superstition?

Or has an angel passed, and revealed the truth to my spirit?"

Then, with a blush, she added, "Alas for my credulous fancy!
Unto ears like thine such words as these have no meaning."

But made answer the reverend man, and he smiled as he answered,—

850

"Daughter, thy words are not idle; nor are they to me without meaning.

Feeling is deep and still; and the word that floats on the surface
Is as the tossing buoy, that betrays where the anchor is hidden.
Therefore trust to thy heart, and to what the world calls
illusions.

Gabriel truly is near thee; for not far away to the southward,
On the banks of the Têche, are the towns of St. Maur and
St. Martin.

There the long-wandering bride shall be given again to her
bridegroom,

857

There the long-absent pastor regain his flock and his sheepfold.
Beautiful is the land, with its prairies and forests of fruit-trees;
Under the feet a garden of flowers, and the bluest of heavens
Bending above, and resting its dome on the walls of the forest.
They who dwell there have named it the Eden of Louisiana."

With these words of cheer they arose and continued their
journey.

Softly the evening came. The sun from the western horizon
Like a magician extended his golden wand o'er the landscape;
Twinkling vapors arose; and sky and water and forest
Seemed all on fire at the touch, and melted and mingled together.
Hanging between two skies, a cloud with edges of silver,
Floated the boat, with its dripping oars, on the motionless
water.

Filled was Evangeline's heart with inexpressible sweetness. 870
Touched by the magic spell, the sacred fountains of feeling
Glowed with the light of love, as the skies and waters around
her.

Then from a neighboring thicket the mocking-bird, wildest
of singers,

Swinging aloft on a willow spray that hung o'er the water,
Shook from his little throat such floods of delirious music,
That the whole air and the woods and the waves seemed silent
to listen.

Plaintive at first were the tones and sad: then soaring to madness
Seemed they to follow or guide the revel of frenzied Bacchantes.
Single notes were then heard, in sorrowful, low lamentation;
Till, having gathered them all, he flung them abroad in deri-
sion, 880

As when, after a storm, a gust of wind through the tree-tops
Shakes down the rattling rain in a crystal shower on the
branches.

With such a prelude as this, and hearts that throbbed with
emotion,

Slowly they entered the Têche, where it flows through the
green Opelousas,

And, through the amber air, above the crest of the woodland,
Saw the column of smoke that arose from a neighboring dwell-
ing;—

Sounds of a horn they heard, and the distant lowing of cattle.

III

Near to the bank of the river, o'ershadowed by oaks, from
whose branches

Garlands of Spanish moss and of mystic mistletoe flaunted,
Such as the Druids cut down with golden hatchets at Yule-
tide, 890

Stood, secluded and still, the house of the herdsman. A garden
Girded it round about with a belt of luxuriant blossoms,
Filling the air with fragrance. The house itself was of timbers
Hewn from the cypress-tree, and carefully fitted together.

Large and low was the roof; and on slender columns supported,
Rose-wreathed, vine-encircled, a broad and spacious veranda,
Haunt of the humming-bird and the bee, extended around it.
At each end of the house, amid the flowers of the garden,
Stationed the dove-cots were, as love's perpetual symbol,
Scenes of endless wooing, and endless contentions of rivals. 900
Silence reigned o'er the place. The line of shadow and sun-
shine

Ran near the tops of the trees; but the house itself was in
shadow,

And from its chimney-top, ascending and slowly expanding
Into the evening air, a thin blue column of smoke rose.

In the rear of the house, from the garden gate, ran a pathway
Through the great groves of oak to the skirts of the limitless
prairie,

Into whose sea of flowers the sun was slowly descending.

Full in his track of light, like ships with shadowy canvas

Hanging loose from their spars in a motionless calm in the
tropics,

Stood a cluster of trees, with tangled cordage of grapevines. 910

Just where the woodlands met the flowery surf of the prairie,
Mounted upon his horse, with Spanish saddle and stirrups,
Sat a herdsman, arrayed in gaiters and doublet of deerskin.
Broad and brown was the face that from under the Spanish
sombrero

Gazed on the peaceful scene, with the lordly look of its master.
Round about him were numberless herds of kine, that were
grazing

Quietly in the meadows, and breathing the vapory freshness
That uprose from the river, and spread itself over the landscape.
Slowly lifting the horn that hung at his side, and expanding
Fully his broad, deep chest, he blew a blast, that resounded 920
Wildly and sweet and far, through the still damp air of the
evening.

Suddenly out of the grass the long white horns of the cattle
Rose like flakes of foam on the adverse currents of ocean.

Silent a moment they gazed, then bellowing rushed o'er the
prairie,

And the whole mass became a cloud, a shade in the distance.

Then, as the herdsman turned to the house, through the gate of
the garden

Saw he the forms of the priest and the maiden advancing to
meet him.

Suddenly down from his horse he sprang in amazement, and
forward

Rushed with extended arms and exclamations of wonder;

When they beheld his face, they recognized Basil the black-
smith.

930

Hearty his welcome was, as he led his guests to the garden.

There in an arbor of roses with endless question and answer

Gave they vent to their hearts, and renewed their friendly
embraces,

Laughing and weeping by turns, or sitting silent and thoughtful.

Thoughtful, for Gabriel came not; and now dark doubts and
misgivings

Stole o'er the maiden's heart; and Basil, somewhat embarrassed,

Broke the silence and said, "If you came by the Atchafalaya,

How have you nowhere encountered my Gabriel's boat on the
bayous?"

Over Evangeline's face at the words of Basil a shade passed.

Tears came into her eyes, and she said, with a tremulous ac-
cent,

940

"Gone? is Gabriel gone?" and, concealing her face on his
shoulder,

All her o'erburdened heart gave way, and she wept and la-
mented.

Then the good Basil said,—and his voice grew blithe as he
said it,—

"Be of good cheer, my child; it is only to-day he departed.

Foolish boy! he has left me alone with my herds and my
horses.

Moody and restless grown, and tried and troubled, his spirit

Could no longer endure the calm of this quiet existence.

Thinking ever of thee, uncertain and sorrowful ever,
Ever silent, or speaking only of thee and his troubles,
He at length had become so tedious to men and to maidens, 950
Tedious even to me, that at length I bethought me, and sent
him

Unto the town of Adayes to trade for mules with the Spaniards.
Thence he will follow the Indian trails to the Ozark Mountains,
Hunting for furs in the forests, on rivers trapping the beaver.
Therefore be of good cheer; we will follow the fugitive lover;
He is not far on his way, and the Fates and the streams are
against him.

Up and away to-morrow, and through the red dew of the
morning
We will follow him fast, and bring him back to his prison."

Then glad voices were heard, and up from the banks of the
river,

Borne aloft on his comrades' arms, came Michael the fiddler. 960
Long under Basil's roof had he lived like a god on Olympus,
Having no other care than dispensing music to mortals.
Far renowned was he for his silver locks and his fiddle.

"Long live Michael," they cried, "our brave Acadian minstrel!"
As they bore him aloft in triumphal procession; and straightway
Father Felician advanced with Evangeline, greeting the old
man

Kindly and oft, and recalling the past, while Basil, enraptured,
Hailed with hilarious joy his old companions and gossips,
Laughing loud and long, and embracing mothers and daughters.
Much they marvelled to see the wealth of the ci-devant black-
smith, 970

All his domains and his herds, and his patriarchal demeanor;
Much they marvelled to hear his tales of the soil and the climate,
And of the prairies, whose numberless herds were his who
would take them;

Each one thought in his heart, that he, too, would go and do
likewise.

Thus they ascended the steps, and, crossing the breezy veranda,

Entered the hall of the house, where already the supper of Basil
Waited his late return; and they rested and feasted together.

Over the joyous feast the sudden darkness descended.
All was silent without, and, illuming the landscape with silver,
Fair rose the dewy moon and the myriad stars; but within
doors, 980
Brighter than these, shone the faces of friends in the glimmering
lamplight.
Then from his station aloft, at the head of the table, the herds-
man
Poured forth his heart and his wine together in endless pro-
fusion.
Lighting his pipe, that was filled with sweet Natchitoches
tobacco,
Thus he spake to his guests, who listened, and smiled as they
listened:—
“Welcome once more, my friends, who long have been friend-
less and homeless,
Welcome once more to a home, that is better perchance than
the old one!
Here no hungry winter congeals our blood like the rivers;
Here no stony ground provokes the wrath of the farmer.
Smoothly the ploughshare runs through the soil, as a keel
through the water. 990
All the year round the orange-groves are in blossom; and grass
grows
More in a single night than a whole Canadian summer.
Here, too, numberless herds run wild and unclaimed in the
prairies;
Here, too, lands may be had for the asking, and forests of
timber
With a few blows of the axe are hewn and framed into houses.
After your houses are built, and your fields are yellow with
harvests,
No King George of England shall drive you away from your
homesteads,

Burning your dwellings and barns, and stealing your farms and
your cattle."

Speaking these words, he blew a wrathful cloud from his nos-
trils,

While his huge, brown hand came thundering down on the
table, 1000

So that the guests all started; and Father Felician, astounded,
Suddenly paused, with a pinch of snuff half-way to his nostrils.
But the brave Basil resumed, and his words were milder and
gayer:—

"Only beware of the fever, my friends, beware of the fever!
For it is not like that of our cold Acadian climate,
Cured by wearing a spider hung round one's neck in a nutshell!"
Then there were voices heard at the door, and footsteps
approaching

Sounded upon the stairs and the floor of the breezy veranda.
It was the neighboring Creoles and small Acadian planters,
Who had been summoned all to the house of Basil the Herds-
man. 1010

Merry the meeting was of ancient comrades and neighbors:
Friend clasped friend in his arms; and they who before were as
strangers,

Meeting in exile, became straightway as friends to each other,
Drawn by the gentle bond of a common country together.
But in the neighboring hall a strain of music, proceeding
From the accordant strings of Michael's melodious fiddle,
Broke up all further speech. Away, like children delighted,
All things forgotten beside, they gave themselves to the mad-
dening

Whirl of the dizzy dance, as it swept and swayed to the music,
Dreamlike, with beaming eyes and the rush of fluttering
garments. 1020

Meanwhile, apart, at the head of the hall, the priest and the
herdsman

Sat, conversing together of past and present and future;
While Evangeline stood like one entranced, for within her

Olden memories rose, and loud in the midst of the music
Heard she the sound of the sea, and an irrepressible sadness
Came o'er her heart, and unseen she stole forth into the garden.
Beautiful was the night. Behind the black wall of the forest,
Tipping its summit with silver, arose the moon. On the river
Fell here and there through the branches a tremulous gleam of
the moonlight,

Like the sweet thoughts of love on a darkened and devious
spirit. 1030

Nearer and round about her, the manifold flowers of the garden
Poured out their souls in odors, that were their prayers and
confessions

Unto the night, as it went its way, like a silent Carthusian.
Fuller of fragrance than they, and as heavy with shadows and
night-dews,

Hung the heart of the maiden. The calm and the magical
moonlight

Seemed to inundate her soul with indefinable longings,
As, through the garden-gate, and beneath the shade of the oak-
trees,

Passed she along the path to the edge of the measureless prairie.
Silent it lay, with a silvery haze upon it, and fire-flies

Gleaming and floating away in mingled and infinite numbers. 1040
Over her head the stars, the thoughts of God in the heavens,
Shone on the eyes of man, who had ceased to marvel and wor-
ship,

Save when a blazing comet was seen on the walls of that
temple,

As if a hand had appeared and written upon them, "Upharsin."
And the soul of the maiden, between the stars and the fire-flies,
Wandered alone, and she cried, "O Gabriel! O my beloved!

Art thou so near unto me, and yet I cannot behold thee?

Art thou so near unto me, and yet thy voice does not reach me?

Ah! how often thy feet have trod this path to the prairie!

Ah! how often thine eyes have looked on the woodlands
around me! 1050

Ah! how often beneath this oak, returning from labor,

Thou hast lain down to rest, and to dream of me in thy slumbers!

When shall these eyes behold, these arms be folded about thee?" Loud and sudden and near the note of a whippoorwill sounded Like a flute in the woods; and anon, through the neighboring thickets,

Farther and farther away it floated and dropped into silence.

"Patience!" whispered the oaks from oracular caverns of darkness:

And, from the moonlit meadow, a sigh responded, "Tomorrow!"

Bright rose the sun next day; and all the flowers of the garden Bathed his shining feet with their tears, and anointed his tresses

1060

With the delicious balm that they bore in their vases of crystal. "Farewell!" said the priest, as he stood at the shadowy threshold;

"See that you bring us the Prodigal Son from his fasting and famine,

And, too, the Foolish Virgin, who slept when the bridegroom was coming."

"Farewell!" answered the maiden, and, smiling, with Basil descended

Down to the river's brink, where the boatmen already were waiting.

Thus beginning their journey with morning, and sunshine, and gladness,

Swiftly they followed the flight of him who was speeding before them,

Blown by the blast of fate like a dead leaf over the desert.

Not that day, nor the next, nor yet the day that succeeded, 1070

Found they trace of his course, in lake or forest or river,

Nor, after many days, had they found him; but vague and uncertain

Rumors alone were their guides through a wild and desolate country;

Till, at the little inn of the Spanish town of Adayes,
Weary and worn, they alighted, and learned from the garrulous
 landlord,
That on the day before, with horses and guides and companions,
Gabriel left the village, and took the road of the prairies.

IV

Far in the West there lies a desert land, where the mountains
Lift, through perpetual snows, their lofty and luminous sum-
 mits.
Down from their jagged, deep ravines, where the gorge, like a
 gateway, 1080
Opens a passage rude to the wheels of the emigrant's wagon,
Westward the Oregon flows and the Walleway and Owyhee.
Eastward, with devious course, among the Wind-river Moun-
 tains,
Through the Sweet-water Valley precipitate leaps the Nebraska;
And to the south, from Fontaine-qui-bout and the Spanish
 sierras,
Fretted with sands and rocks, and swept by the wind of the
 desert,
Numberless torrents, with ceaseless sound, descend to the ocean,
Like the great chords of a harp, in loud and solemn vibrations.
Spreading between these streams are the wondrous, beautiful
 prairies,
Billowy bays of grass ever rolling in shadow and sunshine, 1090
Bright with luxuriant clusters of roses and purple amorphas.
Over them wandered the buffalo herds, and the elk and the
 roebuck;
Over them wandered the wolves, and herds of riderless horses;
Fires that blast and blight, and winds that are weary with
 travel;
Over them wander the scattered tribes of Ishmael's children,
Staining the desert with blood; and above their terrible war-
 trails
Circles and sails aloft, on pinions majestic, the vulture,
Like the implacable soul of a chieftain slaughtered in battle,

By invisible stairs ascending and scaling the heavens.

Here and there rise smokes from the camps of these savage
marauders; 1100

Here and there rise groves from the margins of swift-running
rivers;

And the grim, taciturn bear, the anchorite monk of the desert,
Climbs down their dark ravines to dig for roots by the brook-
side,

And over all is the sky, the clear and crystalline heaven,
Like the protecting hand of God inverted above them.

Into this wonderful land, at the base of the Ozark Moun-
tains,

Gabriel far had entered, with hunters and trappers behind him.
Day after day, with their Indian guides, the maiden and Basil
Followed his flying steps, and thought each day to o'ertake him.
Sometimes they saw, or thought they saw, the smoke of his
camp-fire 1110

Rise in the morning air from the distant plain; but at nightfall,
When they had reached the place, they found only embers and
ashes.

And, though their hearts were sad at times and their bodies
were weary,

Hope still guided them on, as the magic Fata Morgana
Showed them her lakes of light, that retreated and vanished
before them.

Once, as they sat by their evening fire, there silently entered
Into the little camp an Indian woman, whose features
Wore deep traces of sorrow, and patience as great as her
sorrow.

She was a Shawnee woman returning home to her people,
From the far-off hunting-grounds of the cruel Camanches, 1120
Where her Canadian husband, a Coureur-des-Bois, had been
murdered.

Touched were their hearts at her story, and warmest and friend-
liest welcome

Gave they, with words of cheer, and she sat and feasted among
them

On the buffalo-meat and the venison cooked on the embers.

But when their meal was done, and Basil and all his companions,
Worn with the long day's march and the chase of the deer and
the bison,

Stretched themselves on the ground, and slept where the quivering
fire-light

Flashed on their swarthy cheeks, and their forms wrapped up
in their blankets,

Then at the door of Evangeline's tent she sat and repeated

Slowly, with soft, low voice, and the charm of her Indian
accent,

1130

All the tale of her love, with its pleasures, and pains, and
reverses.

Much Evangeline wept at the tale, and to know that another
Hapless heart like her own had loved and had been disappointed.

Moved to the depths of her soul by pity and woman's com-
passion,

Yet in her sorrow pleased that one who had suffered was near
her,

She in turn related her love and all its disasters.

Mute with wonder the Shawnee sat, and when she had ended

Still was mute; but at length, as if a mysterious horror

Passed through her brain, she spake, and repeated the tale of
the Mowis;

Mowis, the bridegroom of snow, who won and wedded a
maiden,

1140

But, when the morning came, arose and passed from the wig-
wam,

Fading and melting away and dissolving into the sunshine,

Till she beheld him no more, though she followed far into the
forest.

Then, in those sweet, low tones, that seemed like a weird in-
cantation,

Told she the tale of the fair Lilinau, who was wooed by a
phantom,

That, through the pines o'er her father's lodge, in the hush of
the twilight,

Breathed like the evening wind, and whispered love to the
maiden,

Till she followed his green and waving plume through the forest,
And nevermore returned, nor was seen again by her people.

Silent with wonder and strange surprise, Evangeline listened 1150
To the soft flow of her magical words, till the region around her
Seemed like enchanted ground, and her swarthy guest the
enchantress.

Slowly over the tops of the Ozark Mountains the moon rose,
Lighting the little tent, and with a mysterious splendor
Touching the sombre leaves, and embracing and filling the
woodland.

With a delicious sound the brook rushed by, and the branches
Swayed and sighed overhead in scarcely audible whispers.

Filled with the thoughts of love was Evangeline's heart, but a
secret,

Subtile sense crept in of pain and indefinite terror,
As the cold, poisonous snake creeps into the nest of the swal-
low. 1160

It was no earthly fear. A breath from the region of spirits
Seemed to float in the air of night; and she felt for a moment
That, like the Indian maid, she, too, was pursuing a phantom.
With this thought she slept, and the fear and the phantom had
vanished.

Early upon the morrow the march was resumed; and the
Shawnee

Said, as they journeyed along, "On the western slope of these
mountains

Dwells in his little village the Black Robe chief of the Mission.
Much he teaches the people, and tells them of Mary and Jesus;
Loud laugh their hearts with joy, and weep with pain, as they
hear him."

Then, with a sudden and secret emotion, Evangeline an-
swered, 1170

"Let us go to the Mission, for there good tidings await us!"

Thither they turned their steeds; and behind a spur of the
mountains,

Just as the sun went down, they heard a murmur of voices,
And in a meadow green and broad, by the bank of a river,
Saw the tents of the Christians, the tents of the Jesuit Mission.
Under a towering oak, that stood in the midst of the village,
Knelt the Black Robe chief with his children. A crucifix
fastened

High on the trunk of the tree, and overshadowed by grape-
vines,

Looked with its agonized face on the multitude kneeling be-
neath it.

This was their rural chapel. Aloft, through the intricate
arches

1180

Of its aerial roof, arose the chant of their vespers,
Mingling its notes with the soft susurrus and sighs of the
branches.

Silent, with heads uncovered, the travellers, nearer approaching,
Knelt on the swarded floor, and joined in the evening devotions.
But when the service was done, and the benediction had fallen
Forth from the hands of the priest, like seed from the hands of
the sower,

Slowly the reverend man advanced to the strangers, and bade
them

Welcome; and when they replied, he smiled with benignant
expression,

Hearing the homelike sounds of his mother-tongue in the forest,
And, with words of kindness, conducted them into his wig-
wam.

1190

There upon mats and skins they reposed, and on cakes of the
maize-ear

Feasted, and slaked their thirst from the water-gourd of the
teacher.

Soon was their story told; and the priest with solemnity an-
swered:—

"Not six suns have risen and set since Gabriel, seated

On this mat by my side, where now the maiden reposes,
Told me this same sad tale; then arose and continued his
journey!"

Soft was the voice of the priest, and he spake with an accent of
kindness;

But on Evangeline's heart fell his words as in winter the snow-
flakes

Fall into some lone nest from which the birds have departed.

"Far to the north he has gone," continued the priest; "but in
autumn,

1200

When the chase is done, will return again to the Mission."

Then Evangeline said, and her voice was meek and submissive,
"Let me remain with thee, for my soul is sad and afflicted."

So seemed it wise and well unto all; and betimes on the morrow,
Mounting his Mexican steed, with his Indian guides and com-
panions,

Homeward Basil returned, and Evangeline stayed at the
Mission.

Slowly, slowly, slowly the days succeeded each other,—
Days and weeks and months; and the fields of maize that were
springing

Green from the ground when a stranger she came, now waving
above her,

Lifted their slender shafts, with leaves interlacing, and form-
ing

1210

Cloisters for mendicant crows and granaries pillaged by
squirrels.

Then in the golden weather the maize was husked, and the
maidens

Blushed at each blood-red ear, for that betokened a lover,
But at the crooked laughed, and called it a thief in the corn-
field.

Even the blood-red ear to Evangeline brought not her lover.

"Patience!" the priest would say; "have faith, and thy prayer
will be answered!"

Look at this vigorous plant that lifts its head from the meadow,

See how its leaves are turned to the north, as true as the magnet;
This is the compass-flower, that the finger of God has planted
Here in the houseless wild, to direct the traveller's journey 1220
Over the sea-like, pathless, limitless waste of the desert.
Such in the soul of man is faith. The blossoms of passion,
Gay and luxuriant flowers, are brighter and fuller of fragrance,
But they beguile us, and lead us astray, and their odor is deadly.
Only this humble plant can guide us here, and hereafter
Crown us with asphodel flowers, that are wet with the dews of
nepenthe."

So came the autumn, and passed, and the winter,—yet Gabriel came not;
Blossomed the opening spring, and the notes of the robin and bluebird
Sounded sweet upon wold and in wood, yet Gabriel came not.
But on the breath of the summer winds a rumor was wafted 1230
Sweeter than song of bird, or hue or odor of blossom.
Far to the north and east, it said, in the Michigan forests,
Gabriel had his lodge by the banks of the Saginaw River.
And, with returning guides, that sought the lakes of St. Lawrence,
Saying a sad farewell, Evangeline went from the Mission.
When over weary ways, by long and perilous marches,
She had attained at length the depths of the Michigan forests,
Found she the hunter's lodge deserted and fallen to ruin!

Thus did the long sad years glide on, and in seasons and places
Divers and distant far was seen the wandering maiden;— 1240
Now in the Tents of Grace of the meek Moravian Missions,
Now in the noisy camps and the battle-fields of the army,
Now in secluded hamlets, in towns and populous cities.
Like a phantom she came, and passed away unremembered.
Fair was she and young, when in hope began the long journey;
Faded was she and old, when in disappointment it ended.
Each succeeding year stole something away from her beauty,

Leaving behind it, broader and deeper, the gloom and the shadow.

Then there appeared and spread faint streaks of gray o'er her forehead,

Dawn of another life, that broke o'er her earthly horizon, 1250
As in the eastern sky the first faint streaks of the morning.

V

In that delightful land which is washed by the Delaware's waters,

Guarding in sylvan shades the name of Penn the apostle,
Stands on the banks of its beautiful stream the city he founded.
There all the air is balm, and the peach is the emblem of beauty,
And the streets still re-echo the names of the trees of the forest,
As if they fain would appease the Dryads whose haunts they molested.

There from the troubled sea had Evangeline landed, an exile,
Finding among the children of Penn a home and a country.
There old René Leblanc had died; and when he departed, 1260
Saw at his side only one of all his hundred descendants.

Something at least there was in the friendly streets of the city,
Something that spake to her heart, and made her no longer a stranger;

And her ear was pleased with the Thee and Thou of the Quakers,

For it recalled the past, the old Acadian country,
Where all men were equal, and all were brothers and sisters.
So, when the fruitless search, the disappointed endeavor,
Ended, to recommence no more upon earth, uncomplaining,
Thither, as leaves to the light, were turned her thoughts and her footsteps.

As from a mountain's top the rainy mists of the morning 1270
Roll away, and afar we behold the landscape below us,
Sun-illumined, with shining rivers and cities and hamlets,
So fell the mists from her mind, and she saw the world far below her,

Dark no longer, but all illumined with love; and the pathway
Which she had climbed so far, lying smooth and fair in the
distance.

Gabriel was not forgotten. Within her heart was his image,
Clothed in the beauty of love and youth, as last she beheld him,
Only more beautiful made by his deathlike silence and absence.
Into her thoughts of him time entered not, for it was not.

Over him years had no power; he was not changed, but trans-
figured; 1280

He had become to her heart as one who is dead, and not absent;
Patience and abnegation of self, and devotion to others,
This was the lesson a life of trial and sorrow had taught her.

So was her love diffused, but, like to some odorous spices,
Suffered no waste nor loss, though filling the air with aroma.

Other hope had she none, nor wish in life, but to follow
Meekly, with reverent steps, the sacred feet of her Saviour.

Thus many years she lived as a Sister of Mercy; frequenting
Lonely and wretched roofs in the crowded lanes of the city,
Where distress and want concealed themselves from the sun-
light, 1290

Where disease and sorrow in garrets languished neglected.
Night after night, when the world was asleep, as the watchman
repeated

Loud, through the gusty streets, that all was well in the city,
High at some lonely window he saw the light of her taper.

Day after day, in the gray of the dawn, as slow through the
suburbs

Plodded the German farmer, with flowers and fruits for the
market,

Met he that meek, pale face, returning home from its watchings.

Then it came to pass that a pestilence fell on the city,
Presaged by wondrous signs, and mostly by flocks of wild
pigeons,

Darkening the sun in their flight, with naught in their craws
but an acorn. 1300

And, as the tides of the sea arise in the month of September,

Flooding some silver stream, till it spreads to a lake in the
meadow,

So death flooded life, and, o'erflowing its natural margin,
Spread to a brackish lake, the silver stream of existence.

Wealth had no power to bribe, nor beauty to charm, the oppressor;

But all perished alike beneath the scourge of his anger;—

Only, alas! the poor, who had neither friends nor attendants;
Crept away to die in the almshouse, home of the homeless.

Then in the suburbs it stood, in the midst of meadows and
woodlands;

Now the city surrounds it; but still, with its gateway and
wicket

1310

Meek, in the midst of splendor, its humble walls seem to echo
Softly the words of the Lord:—"The poor ye always have with
you."

Thither, by night and by day, came the Sister of Mercy. The
dying

Looked up into her face, and thought, indeed, to behold there
Gleams of celestial light encircle her forehead with splendor,
Such as the artist paints o'er the brows of saints and apostles,
Or such as hangs by night o'er a city seen at a distance.

Unto their eyes it seemed the lamps of the city celestial,
Into whose shining gates ere long their spirits would enter.

Thus, on a Sabbath morn, through the streets, deserted and
silent,

1320

Wending her quiet way, she entered the door of the alms-
house.

Sweet on the summer air was the odor of flowers in the garden;
And she paused on her way to gather the fairest among them,
That the dying once more might rejoice in their fragrance and
beauty.

Then, as she mounted the stairs to the corridors, cooled by the
east-wind,

Distant and soft on her ear fell the chimes from the belfry of
Christ Church,

While, intermingled with these, across the meadows were
wafted

Sounds of psalms, that were sung by the Swedes in their church
at Wicaco.

Soft as descending wings fell the calm of the hour on her spirit:
Something within her said, "At length thy trials are ended;"

And, with light in her looks, she entered the chambers of
sickness. 1331

Noiselessly moved about the assiduous, careful attendants,
Moistening the feverish lip, and the aching brow, and in silence
Closing the sightless eyes of the dead, and concealing their
faces,

Where on their pallets they lay, like drifts of snow by the road-
side.

Many a languid head, upraised as Evangeline entered,
Turned on its pillow of pain to gaze while she passed, for her
presence

Fell on their hearts like a ray of the sun on the walls of a prison.
And, as she looked around, she saw how Death, the consoler,
Laying his hand upon many a heart, had healed it forever. 1340
Many familiar forms had disappeared in the night time;
Vacant their places were, or filled already by strangers.

Suddenly, as if arrested by fear or a feeling of wonder,
Still she stood, with her colorless lips apart, while a shudder
Ran through her frame, and, forgotten, the flowerets dropped
from her fingers,
And from her eyes and cheeks the light and bloom of the
morning.

Then there escaped from her lips a cry of such terrible anguish,
That the dying heard it, and started up from their pillows.
On the pallet before her was stretched the form of an old man.
Long, and thin, and gray were the locks that shaded his tem-
ples; 1350

But, as he lay in the morning light, his face for a moment
Seemed to assume once more the forms of its earlier manhood;
So are wont to be changed the faces of those who are dying.

Hot and red on his lips still burned the flush of the fever,
As if life, like the Hebrew, with blood had besprinkled its
portals,

That the Angel of Death might see the sign, and pass over.
Motionless, senseless, dying, he lay, and his spirit exhausted
Seemed to be sinking down through infinite depths in the
darkness,

Darkness of slumber and death, forever sinking and sinking.
Then through those realms of shade, in multiplied reverbera-
tions, 1360

Heard he that cry of pain, and through the hush that succeeded
Whispered a gentle voice, in accents tender and saint-like,
"Gabriel! O my beloved!" and died away into silence.
Then he beheld, in a dream, once more the home of his child-
hood;

Green Acadian meadows, with sylvan rivers among them,
Village, and mountain, and woodlands; and, walking under
their shadow,

As in the days of her youth, Evangeline rose in his vision.
Tears came into his eyes; and as slowly he lifted his eyelids,
Vanished the vision away, but Evangeline knelt by his bedside.
Vainly he strove to whisper her name, for the accents
unuttered 1370

Died on his lips, and their motion revealed what his tongue
would have spoken.

Vainly he strove to rise; and Evangeline, kneeling beside him,
Kissed his dying lips, and laid his head on her bosom.
Sweet was the light of his eyes; but it suddenly sank into
darkness,

As when a lamp is blown out by a gust of wind at a casement.

All was ended now, the hope, and the fear, and the sorrow,
All the aching of heart, the restless, unsatisfied longing,
All the dull, deep pain, and constant anguish of patience!
And, as she pressed once more the lifeless head to her bosom,
Meekly she bowed her own, and murmured, "Father, I thank
thee!" 1380

Still stands the forest primeval; but far away from its shadow,
 Side by side, in their nameless graves, the lovers are sleeping.
 Under the humble walls of the little Catholic churchyard,
 In the heart of the city, they lie, unknown and unnoticed.
 Daily the tides of life go ebbing and flowing beside them,
 Thousands of throbbing hearts, where theirs are at rest and
 forever,
 Thousands of aching brains, where theirs no longer are busy,
 Thousands of toiling hands, where theirs have ceased from
 their labors,
 Thousands of weary feet, where theirs have completed their
 journey!

Still stands the forest primeval; but under the shade of its
 branches 1390
 Dwells another race, with other customs and language.
 Only along the shore of the mournful and misty Atlantic
 Linger a few Acadian peasants, whose fathers from exile
 Wandered back to their native land to die in its bosom.
 In the fisherman's cot the wheel and the loom are still busy;
 Maidens still wear their Norman caps and their kirtles of
 homespun,
 And by the evening fire repeat Evangeline's story,
 While from its rocky caverns the deep-voiced, neighboring
 ocean
 Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of the
 forest.

1847

THE BUILDING OF THE SHIP

"Build me straight, O worthy Master!
 Stanch and strong, a goodly vessel,
 That shall laugh at all disaster,
 And with wave and whirlwind wrestle!"

The merchant's word
 Delighted the Master heard;

For his heart was in his work, and the heart
Giveth grace unto every Art.

A quiet smile played round his lips,
As the eddies and dimples of the tide
Play round the bows of ships,
That steadily at anchor ride. 10
And with a voice that was full of glee,
He answered, "Erelong we will launch
A vessel as goodly, and strong, and stanch,
As ever weathered a wintry sea!"

And first with nicest skill and art,
Perfect and finished in every part,
A little model the Master wrought,
Which should be to the larger plan 20
What the child is to the man,
Its counterpart in miniature;
That with a hand more swift and sure
The greater labor might be brought
To answer to his inward thought.
And as he labored, his mind ran o'er
The various ships that were built of yore,
And above them all, and strangest of all
Towered the Great Harry, crank and tall,
Whose picture was hanging on the wall, 30
With bows and stern raised high in air,
And balconies hanging here and there,
And signal lanterns and flags afloat,
And eight round towers, like those that frown
From some old castle, looking down
Upon the drawbridge and the moat.
And he said with a smile, "Our ship, I wis,
Shall be of another form than this!"

It was of another form, indeed;
Built for freight, and yet for speed, 40

A beautiful and gallant craft;
Broad in the beam, that the stress of the blast,
Pressing down upon sail and mast,
Might not the sharp bows overwhelm;
Broad in the beam, but sloping aft
With graceful curve and slow degrees,
That she might be docile to the helm,
And that the currents of parted seas,
Closing behind, with mighty force,
Might aid and not impede her course.

50

In the ship-yard stood the Master,
With the model of the vessel,
That should laugh at all disaster,
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle!

Covering many a rood of ground,
Lay the timber piled around;
Timber of chestnut, and elm, and oak,
And scattered here and there, with these,
The knarred and crooked cedar knees;
Brought from regions far away,
From Pascagoula's sunny bay,
And the banks of the roaring Roanoke!
Ah! what a wondrous thing it is
To note how many wheels of toil
One thought, one word, can set in motion!
There's not a ship that sails the ocean,
But every climate, every soil,
Must bring its tribute, great or small,
And help to build the wooden wall!

60

The sun was rising o'er the sea,
And long the level shadows lay,
As if they, too, the beams would be
Of some great, airy argosy,
Framed and launched in a single day.

70

That silent architect, the sun,
Had hewn and laid them every one,
Ere the work of man was yet begun.
Beside the Master, when he spoke,
A youth, against an anchor leaning,
Listened, to catch his slightest meaning. 80
Only the long waves, as they broke
In ripples on the pebbly beach,
Interrupted the old man's speech.

Beautiful they were, in sooth,
The old man and the fiery youth!
The old man, in whose busy brain
Many a ship that sailed the main
Was modelled o'er and o'er again;—
The fiery youth, who was to be
The heir of his dexterity, 90
The heir of his house, and his daughter's hand,
When he had built and launched from land
What the elder head had planned.
“Thus,” said he, “will we build this ship!
Lay square the blocks upon the slip,
And follow well this plan of mine.
Choose the timbers with greatest care;
Of all that is unsound beware;
For only what is sound and strong,
To this vessel shall belong. 100
Cedar of Maine and Georgia pine
Here together shall combine.
A goodly frame, and a goodly fame,
And the UNION be her name!
For the day that gives her to the sea
Shall give my daughter unto thee!”

The Master's word
Enraptured the young man heard;
And as he turned his face aside,

With a look of joy and a thrill of pride, 110
Standing before
Her father's door,
He saw the form of his promised bride.
The sun shone on her golden hair,
And her cheek was glowing fresh and fair,
With the breath of morn and the soft sea air.
Like a beauteous barge was she,
Still at rest on the sandy beach,
Just beyond the billow's reach;
But he 120
Was the restless, seething, stormy sea!

Ah, how skilful grows the hand
That obeyeth Love's command!
It is the heart, and not the brain,
That to the highest doth attain,
And he who followeth Love's behest
Far excelleth all the rest!

Thus with the rising of the sun
Was the noble task begun,
And soon throughout the ship-yard's bounds 130
Were heard the intermingled sounds
Of axes and of mallets, plied
With vigorous arms on every side;
Plied so deftly and so well,
That, ere the shadows of evening fell,
The keel of oak for a noble ship,
Scarfed and bolted, straight and strong,
Was lying ready, and stretched along
The blocks, well placed upon the slip.
Happy, thrice happy, every one 140
Who sees his labor well begun,
And not perplexed and multiplied,
By idly waiting for time and tide!

And when the hot, long day was o'er,
The young man at the Master's door
Sat with the maiden calm and still,
And within the porch, a little more
Removed beyond the evening chill,
The father sat, and told them tales
Of wrecks in the great September gales, 150
Of pirates coasting the Spanish Main,
And ships that never came back again,
The chance and change of a sailor's life,
Want and plenty, rest and strife,
His roving fancy, like the wind,
That nothing can stay and nothing can bind,
And the magic charm of foreign lands,
With shadows of palms, and shining sands,
Where the tumbling surf,
O'er the coral reefs of Madagascar, 160
Washes the feet of the swarthy Lascar,
As he lies alone and asleep on the turf.
And the trembling maiden held her breath
At the tales of that awful, pitiless sea,
With all its terror and mystery,
The dim, dark sea, so like unto Death,
That divides and yet unites mankind!
And whenever the old man paused, a gleam
From the bowl of his pipe would awhile illumine
The silent group in the twilight gloom, 170
And thoughtful faces, as in a dream;
And for a moment one might mark
What had been hidden by the dark,
That the head of the maiden lay at rest,
Tenderly, on the young man's breast!

Day by day the vessel grew,
With timbers fashioned strong and true,
Stemson and keelson and sternson-knee,
Till, framed with perfect symmetry,

A skeleton ship rose up to view! 180
And around the bows and along the side
The heavy hammers and mallets plied,
Till after many a week, at length,
Wonderful for form and strength,
Sublime in its enormous bulk,
Loomed aloft the shadowy hulk!
And around it columns of smoke, upwreathing,
Rose from the boiling, bubbling, seething
Caldron, that glowed,
And overflowed 190
With the black tar, heated for the sheathing.
And amid the clamors
Of clattering hammers,
He who listened heard now and then
The song of the Master and his men:—

“Build me straight, O worthy Master,
Stanch and strong, a goodly vessel,
That shall laugh at all disaster,
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle!”

With oaken brace and copper band, 200
Lay the rudder on the sand,
That, like a thought, should have control
Over the movement of the whole;
And near it the anchor, whose giant hand
Would reach down and grapple with the land,
And immovable and fast
Hold the great ship against the bellowing blast!
And at the bows an image stood,
By a cunning artist carved in wood,
With robes of white, that far behind 210
Seemed to be fluttering in the wind.
It was not shaped in a classic mould,
Not like a Nymph or Goddess of old,
Or Naiad rising from the water,

But modelled from the Master's daughter!
On many a dreary and misty night,
'T will be seen by the rays of the signal light,
Speeding along through the rain and the dark,
Like a ghost in its snow-white sark,
The pilot of some phantom bark, 220
Guiding the vessel, in its flight,
By a path none other knows aright!

Behold, at last,
Each tall and tapering mast
Is swung into its place;
Shrouds and stays
Holding it firm and fast!

Long ago,
In the deer-haunted forests of Maine,
When upon mountain and plain 230
Lay the snow,
They fell,—those lordly pines!
Those grand, majestic pines!
'Mid shouts and cheers
The jaded steers,
Panting beneath the goad,
Dragged down the weary, winding road
Those captive kings so straight and tall,
To be shorn of their streaming hair,
And naked and bare, 240
To feel the stress and the strain
Of the wind and the reeling main,
Whose roar
Would remind them forevermore
Of their native forests they should not see again.

And everywhere
The slender, graceful spars
Poise aloft in the air,

And at the mast-head,
White, blue, and red, 250
A flag unrolls the stripes and stars.
Ah! when the wanderer, lonely, friendless,
In foreign harbors shall behold
That flag unrolled,
'T will be as a friendly hand
Stretched out from his native land,
Filling his heart with memories sweet and endless!

All is finished! and at length
Has come the bridal day
Of beauty and of strength. 260
To-day the vessel shall be launched!
With fleecy clouds the sky is blanched,
And o'er the bay,
Slowly, in all his splendors dight,
The great sun rises to behold the sight.

The ocean old,
Centuries old,
Strong as youth, and as uncontrolled,
Paces restless to and fro,
Up and down the sands of gold. 270
His beating heart is not at rest;
And far and wide,
With ceaseless flow,
His beard of snow
Heaves with the heaving of his breast.
He waits impatient for his bride.
There she stands,
With her foot upon the sands,
Decked with flags and streamers gay,
In honor of her marriage day, 280
Her snow-white signals fluttering, blending,
Round her like a veil descending,
Ready to be
The bride of the gray old sea.

On the deck another bride
Is standing by her lover's side.
Shadows from the flags and shrouds,
Like the shadows cast by clouds,
Broken by many a sunny fleck,
Fall around them on the deck.

290

The prayer is said,
The service read.
The joyous bridegroom bows his head;
And in tears the good old Master
Shakes the brown hand of his son,
Kisses his daughter's glowing cheek
In silence, for he cannot speak,
And ever faster
Down his own the tears begin to run.
The worthy pastor—
The shepherd of that wandering flock,
That has the ocean for its wold,
That has the vessel for its fold,
Leaping ever from rock to rock—
Spake, with accents mild and clear,
Words of warning, words of cheer,
But tedious to the bridegroom's ear.
He knew the chart
Of the sailor's heart,
All its pleasures and its griefs,
All its shallows and rocky reefs,
All those secret currents, that flow
With such resistless undertow,
And lift and drift, with terrible force,
The will from its moorings and its course.
Therefore he spake, and thus said he:—
"Like unto ships far off at sea,
Outward or homeward bound, are we.
Before, behind, and all around,
Floats and swings the horizon's bound,

300

310

320

Seems at its distant rim to rise
And climb the crystal wall of the skies,
And then again to turn and sink,
As if we could slide from its outer brink.
Ah! it is not the sea,
It is not the sea that sinks and shelves,
But ourselves
That rock and rise
With endless and uneasy motion,
Now touching the very skies,
Now sinking into the depths of ocean.
Ah! if our souls but poise and swing
Like the compass in its brazen ring,
Ever level and ever true
To the toil and the task we have to do,
We shall sail securely, and safely reach
The Fortunate Isles, on whose shining beach
The sights we see, and the sounds we hear,
Will be those of joy and not of fear!"

330

Then the Master,
With a gesture of command,
Waved his hand;
And at the word,
Loud and sudden there was heard,
All around them and below,
The sound of hammers, blow on blow,
Knocking away the shores and spurs.
And see! she stirs!
She starts,—she moves,—she seems to feel
The thrill of life along her keel,
And, spurning with her foot the ground,
With one exulting, joyous bound,
She leaps into the ocean's arms!

340

350

And lo! from the assembled crowd
There rose a shout, prolonged and loud,

That to the ocean seemed to say,
"Take her, O bridegroom, old and gray,
Take her to thy protecting arms,
With all her youth and all her charms!"

How beautiful she is! How fair 360
She lies within those arms, that press
Her form with many a soft caress
Of tenderness and watchful care!
Sail forth into the sea, O ship!
Through wind and wave, right onward steer!
The moistened eye, the trembling lip,
Are not the signs of doubt or fear.

Sail forth into the sea of life,
O gentle, loving, trusting wife,
And safe from all adversity 370
Upon the bosom of that sea
Thy comings and thy goings be!
For gentleness and love and trust
Prevail o'er angry wave and gust;
And in the wreck of noble lives
Something immortal still survives!

Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State!
Sail on, O UNION, strong and great!
Humanity with all its fears, 380
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!
We know what Master laid thy keel,
What Workmen wrought thy ribs of steel,
Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,
What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
In what a forge and what a heat
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope!
Fear not each sudden sound and shock,
'T is of the wave and not the rock;

'T is but the flapping of the sail,
 And not a rent made by the gale!
 In spite of rock and tempest's roar,
 In spite of false lights on the shore,
 Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!
 Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee,
 Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
 Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
 Are all with thee,—are all with thee!

390
1849

SEAWEED

When descends on the Atlantic
 The gigantic
 Storm-wind of the equinox,
 Landward in his wrath he scourges
 The toiling surges,
 Laden with seaweed from the rocks:

From Bermuda's reefs; from edges
 Of sunken ledges,
 In some far-off, bright Azore;
 From Bahama, and the dashing,
 Silver-flashing
 Surges of San Salvador;

10

From the tumbling surf, that buries
 The Orkneyan skerries,
 Answering the hoarse Hebrides;
 And from wrecks of ships, and drifting
 Spars, uplifting
 On the desolate, rainy seas;—

Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
 On the shifting
 Currents of the restless main;

20

Till in sheltered coves, and reaches
Of sandy beaches,
All have found repose again.

So when storms of wild emotion
Strike the ocean
Of the poet's soul, erelong
From each cave and rocky fastness,
In its vastness,
Floats some fragment of a song:

30

From the far-off isles enchanted,
Heaven has planted
With the golden fruit of Truth;
From the flashing surf, whose vision
Gleams Elysian
In the tropic clime of Youth;

From the strong Will, and the Endeavor
That forever
Wrestle with the tides of Fate;
From the wreck of Hopes far-scattered,
Tempest-shattered,
Floating waste and desolate;—

40

Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
On the shifting
Currents of the restless heart;
Till at length in books recorded,
They, like hoarded
Household words, no more depart.

1845

THE SECRET OF THE SEA

Ah! what pleasant visions haunt me
As I gaze upon the sea!
All the old romantic legends,
All my dreams, come back to me.

Sails of silk and ropes of sandal,
Such as gleam in ancient lore;
And the singing of the sailors,
And the answer from the shore!

Most of all, the Spanish ballad
Haunts me oft, and tarries long, 10
Of the noble Count Arnaldos
And the sailor's mystic song.

Like the long waves on a sea-beach,
Where the sand as silver shines,
With a soft, monotonous cadence,
Flow its unrhymed lyric lines;—

Telling how the Count Arnaldos,
With his hawk upon his hand,
Saw a fair and stately galley,
Steering onward to the land;— 20

How he heard the ancient helmsman
Chant a song so wild and clear,
That the sailing sea-bird slowly
Poised upon the mast to hear,

Till his soul was full of longing,
And he cried, with impulse strong,—
“Helmsman! for the love of heaven,
Teach me, too, that wondrous song!”

“Wouldst thou,”—so the helmsman answered,
“Learn the secret of the sea? 30
Only those who brave its dangers
Comprehend its mystery!”

In each sail that skims the horizon,
In each landward-blowing breeze,

I behold that stately galley,
Hear those mournful melodies;

Till my soul is full of longing
For the secret of the sea,
And the heart of the great ocean
Sends a thrilling pulse through me.

40
1848

THE FIRE OF DRIFT-WOOD

DEVEREUX FARM, NEAR MARBLEHEAD

We sat within the farm-house old,
Whose windows, looking o'er the bay,
Gave to the sea-breeze, damp and cold,
An easy entrance, night and day.

Not far away we saw the port,
The strange, old-fashioned, silent town,
The lighthouse, the dismantled fort,
The wooden houses, quaint and brown.

We sat and talked until the night,
Descending, filled the little room;
Our faces faded from the sight,
Our voices only broke the gloom.

10

We spake of many a vanished scene,
Of what we once had thought and said,
Of what had been, and might have been,
And who was changed, and who **was** dead;

And all that fills the hearts of friends,
When first they feel, with secret pain,
Their lives thenceforth have separate ends,
And never can be one again;

20

The first slight swerving of the heart,
That words are powerless to express,
And leave it still unsaid in part,
Or say it in too great excess.

The very tones in which we spake
Had something strange, I could but mark;
The leaves of memory seemed to make
A mournful rustling in the dark.

Oft died the words upon our lips,
As suddenly, from out the fire
Built of the wreck of stranded ships,
The flames would leap and then expire. 30

And, as their splendor flashed and failed,
We thought of wrecks upon the main,
Of ships dismasted, that were hailed
And sent no answer back again.

The windows, rattling in their frames,
The ocean, roaring up the beach,
The gusty blast, the bickering flames,
All mingled vaguely in our speech; 40

Until they made themselves a part
Of fancies floating through the brain,
The long-lost ventures of the heart,
That send no answers back again.

O flames that glowed! O hearts that yearned!
They were indeed too much akin,
The drift-wood fire without that burned,
The thoughts that burned and glowed within.

KING WITLAF'S DRINKING-HORN

Witlaf, a king of the Saxons,
Ere yet his last he breathed,
To the merry monks of Croyland
His drinking-horn bequeathed,—

That, whenever they sat at their revels,
And drank from the golden bowl,
They might remember the donor,
And breathe a prayer for his soul.

So sat they once at Christmas,
And bade the goblet pass;
In their beards the red wine glistened
Like dew-drops in the grass.

10

They drank to the soul of Witlaf,
They drank to Christ the Lord,
And to each of the Twelve Apostles,
Who had preached his holy word.

They drank to the Saints and Martyrs
Of the dismal days of yore,
And as soon as the horn was empty
They remembered one Saint more.

20

And the reader droned from the pulpit,
Like the murmur of many bees,
The legend of good Saint Guthlac,
And Saint Basil's homilies;

Till the great bells of the convent,
From their prison in the tower,
Guthlac and Bartholomæus,
Proclaimed the midnight hour.

And the Yule-log cracked in the chimney,
 And the Abbot bowed his head, 30
 And the flamelets flapped and flickered,
 But the Abbot was stark and dead.

Yet still in his pallid fingers
 He clutched the golden bowl,
 In which, like a pearl dissolving,
 Had sunk and dissolved his soul.

But not for this their revels
 The jovial monks forbore,
 For they cried, "Fill high the goblet!
 We must drink to one Saint more!" 40
 1848

GASPAR BECERRA

By his evening fire the artist
 Pondered o'er his secret shame;
 Baffled, weary, and disheartened,
 Still he mused, and dreamed of fame.

'T was an image of the Virgin
 That had tasked his utmost skill;
 But, alas! his fair ideal
 Vanished and escaped him still.

From a distant Eastern island
 Had the precious wood been brought; 10
 Day and night the anxious master
 At his toil untiring wrought;

Till, discouraged and desponding,
 Sat he now in shadows deep,
 And the day's humiliation
 Found oblivion in sleep.

Then a voice cried, "Rise, O master!
From the burning brand of oak
Shape the thought that stirs within thee!"
And the startled artist woke,—

20

Woke, and from the smoking embers
Seized and quenched the glowing wood;
And therefrom he carved an image,
And he saw that it was good.

O thou sculptor, painter, poet!
Take this lesson to thy heart:
That is best which lieth nearest;
Shape from that thy work of art.

1849

From THE SONG OF HIAWATHA

INTRODUCTION

Should you ask me, whence these stories?
Whence these legends and traditions,
With the odors of the forest,
With the dew and damp of meadows,
With the curling smoke of wigwams,
With the rushing of great rivers,
With their frequent repetitions,
And their wild reverberations,
As of thunder in the mountains?

I should answer, I should tell you,
"From the forests and the prairies,
From the great lakes of the Northland,
From the land of the Ojibways,
From the land of the Dacotahs,
From the mountains, moors, and fen-lands,
Where the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,
Feeds among the reeds and rushes.

10

I repeat them as I heard them
From the lips of Nawadaha,
The musician, the sweet singer."

20

Should you ask where Nawadaha
Found these songs so wild and wayward,
Found these legends and traditions,
I should answer, I should tell you,
"In the bird's-nests of the forest,
In the lodges of the beaver,
In the hoof-prints of the bison,
In the eyry of the eagle!

"All the wild-fowl sang them to him,
In the moorlands and the fen-lands,
In the melancholy marshes;
Chetowaik, the plover, sang them,
Mahng, the loon, the wild-goose, Wawa,
The blue heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,
And the grouse, the Mushkodasa!"

30

If still further you should ask me,
Saying, "Who was Nawadaha?
Tell us of this Nawadaha,"
I should answer your inquiries
Straightway in such words as follow.

40

"In the Vale of Tawasentha,
In the green and silent valley,
By the pleasant water-courses,
Dwelt the singer Nawadaha.
Round about the Indian village
Spread the meadows and the corn-fields,
And beyond them stood the forest,
Stood the groves of singing pine-trees,
Green in Summer, white in Winter,
Ever sighing, ever singing.

50

"And the pleasant water-courses,
You could trace them through the valley,
By the rushing in the Spring-time,
By the alders in the Summer,

By the white fog in the Autumn,
By the black line in the Winter;
And beside them dwelt the singer,
In the vale of Tawasentha,
In the green and silent valley.

“There he sang of Hiawatha, 60
Sang the Song of Hiawatha,
Sang his wondrous birth and being,
How he prayed and how he fasted,
How he lived, and toiled, and suffered,
That the tribes of men might prosper,
That he might advance his people!”

Ye who love the haunts of Nature,
Love the sunshine of the meadow,
Love the shadow of the forest,
Love the wind among the branches, 70
And the rain-shower and the snow-storm,
And the rushing of great rivers
Through their palisades of pine-trees,
And the thunder in the mountains,
Whose innumerable echoes
Flap like eagles in their eyries;—
Listen to these wild traditions,
To this Song of Hiawatha!

Ye who love a nation's legends, 80
Love the ballads of a people,
That like voices from afar off
Call to us to pause and listen,
Speak in tones so plain and childlike,
Scarcely can the ear distinguish
Whether they are sung or spoken;—
Listen to this Indian Legend,
To this Song of Hiawatha!

Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple,
Who have faith in God and Nature,
Who believe, that in all ages 90
Every human heart is human,

That in even savage bosoms
 There are longings, yearnings, strivings
 For the good they comprehend not,
 That the feeble hands and helpless,
 Groping blindly in the darkness,
 Touch God's right hand in that darkness
 And are lifted up and strengthened;—
 Listen to this simple story,
 To this Song of Hiawatha!

100

Ye, who sometimes, in your rambles
 Through the green lanes of the country,
 Where the tangled barberry-bushes
 Hang their tufts of crimson berries
 Over stone walls gray with mosses,
 Pause by some neglected graveyard,
 For a while to muse, and ponder
 On a half-effaced inscription,
 Written with little skill of song-craft,
 Homely phrases, but each letter
 Full of hope and yet of heart-break,
 Full of all the tender pathos
 Of the Here and the Hereafter;—
 Stay and read this rude inscription,
 Read this Song of Hiawatha!

110

1. THE PEACE-PIPE

On the Mountains of the Prairie,
 On the great Red Pipe-stone Quarry,
 Gitche Manito, the mighty,
 He the Master of Life, descending,
 On the red crags of the quarry
 Stood erect, and called the nations,
 Called the tribes of men together.

From his footprints flowed a river,
 Leaped into the light of morning,
 O'er the precipice plunging downward

10

Gleamed like Ishkoodah, the comet.
And the Spirit, stooping earthward,
With his finger on the meadow
Traced a winding pathway for it,
Saying to it, "Run in this way!"

From the red stone of the quarry
With his hand he broke a fragment,
Moulded it into a pipe-head,
Shaped and fashioned it with figures;
From the margin of the river
Took a long reed for a pipe-stem,
With its dark green leaves upon it;
Filled the pipe with bark of willow,
With the bark of the red willow;
Breathed upon the neighboring forest,
Made its great boughs chafe together,
Till in flame they burst and kindled;
And erect upon the mountains,
Gitche Manito, the mighty,
Smoked the calumet, the Peace-Pipe,
As a signal to the nations.

20

30

And the smoke rose slowly, slowly,
Through the tranquil air of morning,
First a single line of darkness,
Then a denser, bluer vapor,
Then a snow-white cloud unfolding,
Like the tree-tops of the forest,
Ever rising, rising, rising,
Till it touched the top of heaven,
Till it broke against the heaven,
And rolled outward all around it.

40

From the Vale of Tawasenta,
From the Valley of Wyoming,
From the groves of Tuscaloosa,
From the far-off Rocky Mountains,
From the Northern lakes and rivers
All the tribes beheld the signal,

Saw the distant smoke ascending,
The Pukwana of the Peace-Pipe.

And the Prophets of the nations 50
Said: "Behold it, the Pukwana!
By this signal from afar off,
Bending like a wand of willow,
Waving like a hand that beckons,
Gitche Manito, the mighty,
Calls the tribes of men together,
Calls the warriors to his council!"

Down the rivers, o'er the prairies,
Came the warriors of the nations,
Came the Delawares and Mohawks, 60
Came the Choctaws and Camanches,
Came the Shoshonies and Blackfeet,
Came the Pawnees and Omahas,
Came the Mandans and Dacotahs,
Came the Hurons and Ojibways,
All the warriors drawn together
By the signal of the Peace-Pipe,
To the Mountains of the Prairie,
To the great Red Pipe-stone Quarry.

And they stood there on the meadow, 70
With their weapons and their war-gear,
Painted like the leaves of Autumn,
Painted like the sky of morning,
Wildly glaring at each other;
In their faces stern defiance,
In their hearts the feuds of ages,
The hereditary hatred,
The ancestral thirst of vengeance.

Gitche Manito, the mighty, 80
The creator of the nations,
Looked upon them with compassion,
With paternal love and pity;
Looked upon their wrath and wrangling
But as quarrels among children,

But as feuds and fights of children!

Over them he stretched his right hand,
To subdue their stubborn natures,
To allay their thirst and fever,
By the shadow of his right hand;
Spake to them with voice majestic
As the sound of far-off waters,
Falling into deep abysses,

90

Warning, chiding, spake in this wise:—

“O my children! my poor children!

Listen to the words of wisdom,
Listen to the words of warning,
From the lips of the Great Spirit,
From the Master of Life, who made you!

“I have given you lands to hunt in,

I have given you streams to fish in,

100

I have given you bear and bison,

I have given you roe and reindeer,

I have given you brant and beaver,

Filled the marshes full of wild-fowl,

Filled the rivers full of fishes;

Why then are you not contented?

Why then will you hunt each other?

“I am weary of your quarrels,

Weary of your wars and bloodshed,

Weary of your prayers for vengeance,

110

Of your wranglings and dissensions;

All your strength is in your union,

All your danger is in discord;

Therefore be at peace henceforward,

And as brothers live together.

“I will send a Prophet to you,

A Deliverer of the nations,

Who shall guide you and shall teach you,

Who shall toil and suffer with you.

If you listen to his counsels,

120

You will multiply and prosper;

If his warnings pass unheeded,
You will fade away and perish!

“Bathe now in the stream before you,
Wash the war-paint from your faces,
Wash the blood-stains from your fingers,
Bury your war-clubs and your weapons,
Break the red stone from this quarry,
Mould and make it into Peace-Pipes,
Take the reeds that grow beside you, 130
Deck them with your brightest feathers,
Smoke the calumet together,
And as brothers live henceforward!”

Then upon the ground the warriors
Threw their cloaks and shirts of deerskin,
Threw their weapons and their war-gear,
Leaped into the rushing river,
Washed the war-paint from their faces.
Clear above them flowed the water,
Clear and limpid from the footprints 140
Of the Master of Life descending;
Dark below them flowed the water,
Soiled and stained with streaks of crimson,
As if blood were mingled with it!

From the river came the warriors,
Clean and washed from all their war-paint;
On the banks their clubs they buried,
Buried all their warlike weapons.
Gitche Manito, the mighty,
The Great Spirit, the creator, 150
Smiled upon his helpless children!

And in silence all the warriors
Broke the red stone of the quarry,
Smoothed and formed it into Peace-Pipes,
Broke the long reeds by the river,
Decked them with their brightest feathers,
And departed each one homeward,
While the Master of Life, ascending,

Through the opening of cloud-curtains,
Through the doorways of the heaven, 160
Vanished from before their faces,
In the smoke that rolled around him,
The Pukwana of the Peace-Pipe!

II. THE FOUR WINDS

“Honor be to Mudjekeewis!”
Cried the warriors, cried the old men,
When he came in triumph homeward
With the sacred Belt of Wampum,
From the regions of the North-Wind,
From the kingdom of Wabasso,
From the land of the White Rabbit.

He had stolen the Belt of Wampum
From the neck of Mishe-Mokwa,
From the Great Bear of the mountains, 10
From the terror of the nations,
As he lay asleep and cumbrous
On the summit of the mountains,
Like a rock with mosses on it,
Spotted brown and gray with mosses.

Silently he stole upon him,
Till the red nails of the monster
Almost touched him, almost scared him,
Till the hot breath of his nostrils
Warmed the hands of Mudjekeewis, 20
As he drew the Belt of Wampum
Over the round ears, that heard not,
Over the small eyes, that saw not,
Over the long nose and nostrils,
The black muffle of the nostrils,
Out of which the heavy breathing
Warmed the hands of Mudjekeewis.

Then he swung aloft his war-club,
Shouted loud and long his war-cry,
Smote the mighty Mishe-Mokwa 30

In the middle of the forehead,
Right between the eyes he smote him.

With the heavy blow bewildered,
Rose the Great Bear of the mountains;
But his knees beneath him trembled,
And he whimpered like a woman,
As he reeled and staggered forward,
As he sat upon his haunches;
And the mighty Mudjekeewis,
Standing fearlessly before him,
Taunted him in loud derision,
Spake disdainfully in this wise:—

40

“Hark you, Bear! you are a coward;
And no Brave, as you pretended;
Else you would not cry and whimper
Like a miserable woman!
Bear! you know our tribes are hostile,
Long have been at war together;
Now you find that we are strongest,
You go sneaking in the forest,
You go hiding in the mountains!
Had you conquered me in battle
Not a groan would I have uttered;
But you, Bear! sit here and whimper,
And disgrace your tribe by crying,
Like a wretched Shaugodaya,
Like a cowardly old woman!”

50

Then again he raised his war-club,
Smote again the Mishe-Mokwa
In the middle of his forehead,
Broke his skull, as ice is broken
When one goes to fish in Winter.
Thus was slain the Mishe-Mokwa,
He the Great Bear of the mountains,
He the terror of the nations.

60

“Honor be to Mudjekeewis!”
With a shout exclaimed the people,

“Honor be to Mudjekeewis!
Henceforth he shall be the West-Wind,
And hereafter and forever
Shall he hold supreme dominion
Over all the winds of heaven.
Call him no more Mudjekeewis,
Call him Kabeyun, the West-Wind!”

70

Thus was Mudjekeewis chosen
Father of the Winds of Heaven.
For himself he kept the West-Wind,
Gave the others to his children;
Unto Wabun gave the East-Wind,
Gave the South to Shawondasee,
And the North-Wind, wild and cruel,
To the fierce Kabibonokka.

80

Young and beautiful was Wabun;
He it was who brought the morning,
He it was whose silver arrows
Chased the dark o'er hill and valley;
He it was whose cheeks were painted
With the brightest streaks of crimson,
And whose voice awoke the village,
Called the deer, and called the hunter.

90

Lonely in the sky was Wabun;
Though the birds sang gayly to him,
Though the wild-flowers of the meadow
Filled the air with odors for him,
Though the forests and the rivers
Sang and shouted at his coming,
Still his heart was sad within him,
For he was alone in heaven.

But one morning, gazing earthward,
While the village still was sleeping,
And the fog lay on the river,
Like a ghost, that goes at sunrise,
He beheld a maiden walking
All alone upon a meadow,

100

Gathering water-flags and rushes
By a river in the meadow.

Every morning, gazing earthward,
Still the first thing he beheld there
Was her blue eyes looking at him,
Two blue lakes among the rushes.
And he loved the lonely maiden,
Who thus waited for his coming;
For they both were solitary,
She on earth and he in heaven.

110

And he wooed her with caresses,
Wooed her with his smile of sunshine,
With his flattering words he wooed her,
With his sighing and his singing,
Gentlest whispers in the branches,
Softest music, sweetest odors,
Till he drew her to his bosom,
Folded in his robes of crimson,
Till into a star he changed her,
Trembling still upon his bosom;
And forever in the heavens
They are seen together walking,
Wabun and the Wabun-Annung,
Wabun and the Star of Morning.

120

But the fierce Kabibonokka
Had his dwelling among icebergs,
In the everlasting snow-drifts,
In the kingdom of Wabasso,
In the land of the White Rabbit.
He it was whose hand in Autumn
Painted all the trees with scarlet,
Stained the leaves with red and yellow;
He it was who sent the snow-flakes,
Sifting, hissing through the forest,
Froze the ponds, the lakes, the rivers,
Drove the loon and sea-gull southward,
Drove the cormorant and curlew

130

140

To their nests of sedge and sea-tang
In the realms of Shawondasee.

Once the fierce Kabibonokka
Issued from his lodge of snow-drifts,
From his home among the icebergs,
And his hair, with snow besprinkled,
Streamed behind him like a river,
Like a black and wintry river,
As he howled and hurried southward,
Over frozen lakes and moorlands.

150

There among the reeds and rushes
Found he Shingebis, the diver,
Trailing strings of fish behind him,
O'er the frozen fens and moorlands,
Lingering still among the moorlands,
Though his tribe had long departed
To the land of Shawondasee.

Cried the fierce Kabibonokka,
"Who is this that dares to brave me?
Dares to stay in my dominions,
When the Wawa has departed,
When the wild-goose has gone southward,
And the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,
Long ago departed southward?
I will go into his wigwam,
I will put his smouldering fire out!"

160

And at night Kabibonokka
To the lodge came wild and wailing,
Heaped the snow in drifts about it,
Shouted down into the smoke-flue,
Shook the lodge-poles in his fury,
Flapped the curtain of the door-way.
Shingebis, the diver, feared not,
Shingebis, the diver, cared not;
Four great logs had he for firewood,
One for each moon of the winter,
And for food the fishes served him.

170

By his blazing fire he sat there,
Warm and merry, eating, laughing, 180
Singing, "O Kabibonokka,
You are but my fellow-mortal!"

Then Kabibonokka entered,
And though Shingebis, the diver,
Felt his presence by the coldness,
Felt his icy breath upon him,
Still he did not cease his singing,
Still he did not leave his laughing,
Only turned the log a little,
Only made the fire burn brighter, 190
Made the sparks fly up the smoke-flue.

From Kabibonokka's forehead,
From his snow-besprinkled tresses,
Drops of sweat fell fast and heavy,
Making dints upon the ashes,
As along the eaves of lodges,
As from drooping boughs of hemlock,
Drips the melting snow in spring-time,
Making hollows in the snow-drifts.

Till at last he rose defeated, 200
Could not bear the heat and laughter,
Could not bear the merry singing,
But rushed headlong through the doorway,
Stamped upon the crusted snow-drifts,
Stamped upon the lakes and rivers,
Made the snow upon them harder,
Made the ice upon them thicker,
Challenged Shingebis, the diver,
To come forth and wrestle with him,
To come forth and wrestle naked 210
On the frozen fens and moorlands.

Forth went Shingebis, the diver,
Wrestled all night with the North-Wind,
Wrestled naked on the moorlands
With the fierce Kabibonokka,

Till his panting breath grew fainter,
Till his frozen grasp grew feebler,
Till he reeled and staggered backward,
And retreated, baffled, beaten,
To the kingdom of Wabasso,
To the land of the White Rabbit,
Hearing still the gusty laughter,
Hearing Shingebis, the diver,
Singing, "O Kabibonokka,
You are but my fellow-mortal!"

220

Shawondasee, fat and lazy,
Had his dwelling far to southward,
In the drowsy, dreamy sunshine,
In the never-ending Summer.
He it was who sent the wood-birds,
Sent the robin, the Opechee,
Sent the bluebird, the Owaissa,
Sent the Shawshaw, sent the swallow,
Sent the wild-goose, Wawa, northward,
Sent the melons and tobacco,
And the grapes in purple clusters.

230

From his pipe the smoke ascending
Filled the sky with haze and vapor,
Filled the air with dreamy softness,
Gave a twinkle to the water,
Touched the rugged hills with smoothness,
Brought the tender Indian Summer
To the melancholy north-land,
In the dreary Moon of Snow-shoes.

240

Listless, careless Shawondasee!
In his life he had one shadow,
In his heart one sorrow had he.
Once, as he was gazing northward,
Far away upon a prairie
He beheld a maiden standing,
Saw a tall and slender maiden
All alone upon a prairie;

250

Brightest green were all her garments,
And her hair was like the sunshine.

Day by day he gazed upon her,
Day by day he sighed with passion,
Day by day his heart within him
Grew more hot with love and longing
For the maid with yellow tresses.

But he was too fat and lazy 260
To bestir himself and woo her;
Yes, too indolent and easy
To pursue her and persuade her.
So he only gazed upon her,
Only sat and sighed with passion
For the maiden of the prairie.

Till one morning, looking northward,
He beheld her yellow tresses
Changed and covered o'er with whiteness,
Covered as with whitest snow-flakes. 270
"Ah! my brother from the North-land,
From the kingdom of Wabasso,
From the land of the White Rabbit!
You have stolen the maiden from me,
You have laid your hand upon her,
You have wooed and won my maiden,
With your stories of the North-land!"

Thus the wretched Shawondasee
Breathed into the air his sorrow;
And the South-Wind o'er the prairie 280
Wandered warm with sighs of passion,
With the sighs of Shawondasee,
Till the air seemed full of snow-flakes,
Full of thistle-down the prairie,
And the maid with hair like sunshine
Vanished from his sight forever;
Never more did Shawondasee
See the maid with yellow tresses!
Poor, deluded Shawondasee!

'T was no woman that you gazed at, 290
'T was no maiden that you sighed for,
'T was the prairie dandelion
That through all the dreamy Summer
You had gazed at with such longing,
You had sighed for with such passion,
And had puffed away forever,
Blown into the air with sighing.
Ah! deluded Shawondasee!

Thus the Four Winds were divided;
Thus the sons of Mudjekeewis 300
Had their stations in the heavens,
At the corners of the heavens;
For himself the West-Wind only
Kept the mighty Mudjekeewis.

III. HIAWATHA'S CHILDHOOD

Downward through the evening twilight,
In the days that are forgotten,
In the unremembered ages,
From the full moon fell Nokomis,
Fell the beautiful Nokomis,
She a wife, but not a mother.

She was sporting with her women,
Swinging in a swing of grape-vines,
When her rival, the rejected, 10
Full of jealousy and hatred,
Cut the leafy swing asunder,
Cut in twain the twisted grape-vines,
And Nokomis fell affrighted
Downward through the evening twilight,
On the Muskoday, the meadow,
On the prairie full of blossoms.
"See! a star falls!" said the people;
"From the sky a star is falling!"

There among the ferns and mosses,
There among the prairie lilies, 20

On the Muskoday, the meadow,
In the moonlight and the starlight,
Fair Nokomis bore a daughter.
And she called her name Wenonah,
As the first-born of her daughters.
And the daughter of Nokomis
Grew up like the prairie lilies,
Grew a tall and slender maiden,
With the beauty of the moonlight,
With the beauty of the starlight.

30

And Nokomis warned her often,
Saying oft, and oft repeating,
"Oh, beware of Mudjekeewis,
Of the West-Wind, Mudjekeewis;
Listen not to what he tells you;
Lie not down upon the meadow,
Stoop not down among the lilies,
Lest the West-Wind come and harm you!"

But she heeded not the warning,
Heeded not those words of wisdom,
And the West-Wind came at evening,
Walking lightly o'er the prairie,
Whispering to the leaves and blossoms,
Bending low the flowers and grasses,
Found the beautiful Wenonah,
Lying there among the lilies,
Wooed her with his words of sweetness,
Wooed her with his soft caresses,
Till she bore a son in sorrow,
Bore a son of love and sorrow.

40

50

Thus was born my Hiawatha,
Thus was born the child of wonder;
But the daughter of Nokomis,
Hiawatha's gentle mother,
In her anguish died deserted
By the West-Wind, false and faithless,
By the heartless Mudjekeewis.

For her daughter, long and loudly
Wailed and wept the sad Nokomis;
"O that I were dead!" she murmured, 60
"O that I were dead, as thou art!
No more work, and no more weeping,
Wahonowin! Wahonowin!"

By the shores of Gitche Gumee,
By the shining Big-Sea-Water,
Stood the wigwam of Nokomis,
Daughter of the Moon, Nokomis.
Dark behind it rose the forest,
Rose the black and gloomy pine-trees,
Rose the firs with cones upon them; 70
Bright before it beat the water,
Beat the clear and sunny water,
Beat the shining Big-Sea-Water.

There the wrinkled old Nokomis
Nursed the little Hiawatha,
Rocked him in his linden cradle,
Bedded soft in moss and rushes,
Safely bound with reindeer sinews;
Stilled his fretful wail by saying,
"Hush! the Naked Bear will hear thee!" 80
Lulled him into slumber, singing,
"Ewa-yea! my little owlet!
Who is this, that lights the wigwam?
With his great eyes lights the wigwam?
Ewa-yea! my little owlet!"

Many things Nokomis taught him
Of the stars that shine in heaven;
Showed him Ishkoodah, the comet,
Ishkoodah, with fiery tresses;
Showed the Death-Dance of the spirits, 90
Warriors with their plumes and war-clubs,
Flaring far away to northward
In the frosty nights of Winter;
Showed the broad white road in heaven,

Pathway of the ghosts, the shadows,
Running straight across the heavens,
Crowded with the ghosts, the shadows.

At the door on summer evenings
Sat the little Hiawatha;
Heard the whispering of the pine-trees, 100
Heard the lapping of the water,
Sounds of music, words of wonder;
"Minne-wawa!" said the pine-trees,
"Mudway-aushka!" said the water.

Saw the fire-fly, Wah-wah-taysee,
Flitting through the dusk of evening,
With the twinkle of its candle
Lighting up the brakes and bushes,
And he sang the song of children,
Sang the song Nokomis taught him: 110
"Wah-wah-taysee, little fire-fly,
Little, flitting, white-fire insect,
Little, dancing, white-fire creature,
Light me with your little candle,
Ere upon my bed I lay me,
Ere in sleep I close my eyelids!"

Saw the moon rise from the water
Rippling, rounding from the water,
Saw the flecks and shadows on it,
Whispered, "What is that, Nokomis?" 120
And the good Nokomis answered:
"Once a warrior, very angry,
Seized his grandmother, and threw her
Up into the sky at midnight;
Right against the moon he threw her;
'T is her body that you see there."

Saw the rainbow in the heaven,
In the eastern sky, the rainbow,
Whispered, "What is that, Nokomis?"
And the good Nokomis answered: 130
"'T is the heaven of flowers you see there;

All the wild-flowers of the forest,
All the lilies of the prairie,
When on earth they fade and perish,
Blossom in that heaven above us."

When he heard the owls at midnight,
Hooting, laughing in the forest,
"What is that?" he cried in terror;
"What is that," he said, "Nokomis?"
And the good Nokomis answered:
"That is but the owl and owlet,
Talking in their native language,
Talking, scolding at each other."

140

Then the little Hiawatha
Learned of every bird its language,
Learned their names and all their secrets,
How they built their nests in Summer,
Where they hid themselves in Winter,
Talked with them whene'er he met them,
Called them "Hiawatha's Chickens."

150

Of all beasts he learned the language,
Learned their names and all their secrets,
How the beavers built their lodges,
Where the squirrels hid their acorns,
How the reindeer ran so swiftly,
Why the rabbit was so timid,
Talked with them whene'er he met them,
Called them "Hiawatha's Brothers."

Then Iagoo, the great boaster,
He the marvellous story-teller,
He the traveller and the talker,
He the friend of old Nokomis,
Made a bow for Hiawatha;
From a branch of ash he made it,
From an oak-bough made the arrows,
Tipped with flint, and winged with feathers,
And the cord he made of deer-skin.

160

Then he said to Hiawatha:

"Go, my son, into the forest,
Where the red deer herd together, 170
Kill for us a famous roebuck,
Kill for us a deer with antlers!"

Forth into the forest straightway
All alone walked Hiawatha
Proudly, with his bow and arrows;
And the birds sang round him, o'er him,
"Do not shoot us, Hiawatha!"
Sang the robin, the Opechee,
Sang the bluebird, the Owaissa,
"Do not shoot us, Hiawatha!" 180

Up the oak-tree, close beside him,
Sprang the squirrel, Adjidaumo,
In and out among the branches,
Coughed and chattered from the oak-tree,
Laughed, and said between his laughing,
"Do not shoot me, Hiawatha!"

And the rabbit from his pathway
Leaped aside, and at a distance
Sat erect upon his haunches,
Half in fear and half in frolic, 190
Saying to the little hunter,
"Do not shoot me, Hiawatha!"

But he heeded not, nor heard them,
For his thoughts were with the red deer;
On their tracks his eyes were fastened,
Leading downward to the river,
To the ford across the river,
And as one in slumber walked he.

Hidden in the alder-bushes,
There he waited till the deer came, 200
Till he saw two antlers lifted,
Saw two eyes look from the thicket,
Saw two nostrils point to windward,
And a deer came down the pathway,
Flecked with leafy light and shadow.

And his heart within him fluttered,
Trembled like the leaves above him,
Like the birch-leaf palpitated,
As the deer came down the pathway.

Then, upon one knee uprising,
Hiawatha aimed an arrow;
Scarce a twig moved with his motion,
Scarce a leaf was stirred or rustled,
But the wary roebuck started,
Stamped with all his hoofs together,
Listened with one foot uplifted,
Leaped as if to meet the arrow;
Ah! the singing, fatal arrow,
Like a wasp it buzzed and stung him!

210

Dead he lay there in the forest,
By the ford across the river;
Beat his timid heart no longer,
But the heart of Hiawatha
Throbbled and shouted and exulted,
As he bore the red deer homeward,
And Iagoo and Nokomis
Hailed his coming with applauses.

220

From the red deer's hide Nokomis
Made a cloak for Hiawatha,
From the red deer's flesh Nokomis
Made a banquet in his honor.
All the village came and feasted,
All the guests praised Hiawatha,
Called him Strong-Heart, Soan-ge-taha!
Called him Loon-Heart, Mahn-go-taysee!

230

VI. HIAWATHA'S FRIENDS

Two good friends had Hiawatha,
Singled out from all the others,
Bound to him in closest union,
And to whom he gave the right hand

Of his heart, in joy and sorrow;
Chibiabos, the musician,
And the very strong man, Kwasind.

Straight between them ran the pathway,
Never grew the grass upon it;
Singing birds, that utter falsehoods, 10
Story-tellers, mischief-makers,
Found no eager ear to listen,
Could not breed ill-will between them,
For they kept each other's counsel,
Spake with naked hearts together,
Pondering much and much contriving
How the tribes of men might prosper.

Most beloved by Hiawatha
Was the gentle Chibiabos,
He the best of all musicians, 20
He the sweetest of all singers.
Beautiful and childlike was he,
Brave as man is, soft as woman,
Pliant as a wand of willow,
Stately as a deer with antlers.

When he sang, the village listened;
All the warriors gathered round him,
All the women came to hear him;
Now he stirred their souls to passion,
Now he melted them to pity. 30

From the hollow reeds he fashioned
Flutes so musical and mellow,
That the brook, the Sebowisha,
Ceased to murmur in the woodland,
That the wood-birds ceased from singing,
And the squirrel, Adjidaumo,
Ceased his chatter in the oak-tree,
And the rabbit, the Wabasso,
Sat upright to look and listen.

Yes, the brook, the Sebowisha, 40
Pausing, said, "O Chibiabos,

Teach my waves to flow in music,
Softly as your words in singing!"

Yes, the bluebird, the Owaissa,
Envious, said, "O Chibiabos,
Teach me tones as wild and wayward,
Teach me songs as full of frenzy!"

Yes, the robin, the Opechee,
Joyous, said, "O Chibiabos,
Teach me tones as sweet and tender, 50
Teach me songs as full of gladness!"

And the whippoorwill, Wawonaissa,
Sobbing, said, "O Chibiabos,
Teach me tones as melancholy,
Teach me songs as full of sadness!"

All the many sounds of nature
Borrowed sweetness from his singing;
All the hearts of men were softened
By the pathos of his music;
For he sang of peace and freedom, 60
Sang of beauty, love, and longing;
Sang of death, and life undying
In the Islands of the Blessed,
In the kingdom of Ponemah,
In the land of the Hereafter.

Very dear to Hiawatha
Was the gentle Chibiabos,
He the best of all musicians,
He the sweetest of all singers;
For his gentleness he loved him, 70
And the magic of his singing.

Dear, too, unto Hiawatha
Was the very strong man, Kwasind,
He the strongest of all mortals,
He the mightiest among many;
For his very strength he loved him,
For his strength allied to goodness.

Idle in his youth was Kwasind,

Very listless, dull, and dreamy,
Never played with other children, 80
Never fished and never hunted,
Not like other children was he;
But they saw that much he fasted,
Much his Manito entreated,
Much besought his Guardian Spirit.

“Lazy Kwasind!” said his mother,
“In my work you never help me!
In the Summer you are roaming
Idly in the fields and forests;
In the Winter you are cowering 90
O’er the firebrands in the wigwam!
In the coldest days of Winter
I must break the ice for fishing;
With my nets you never help me!
At the door my nets are hanging,
Dripping, freezing with the water;
Go and wring them, Yenadizze!
Go and dry them in the sunshine!”

Slowly, from the ashes, Kwasind
Rose, but made no angry answer; 100
From the lodge went forth in silence,
Took the nets, that hung together,
Dripping, freezing at the doorway,
Like a wisp of straw he wrung them,
Like a wisp of straw he broke them,
Could not wring them without breaking,
Such the strength was in his fingers.

“Lazy Kwasind!” said his father,
“In the hunt you never help me;
Every bow you touch is broken, 110
Snapped asunder every arrow;
Yet come with me to the forest,
You shall bring the hunting homeward.”

Down a narrow pass they wandered,
Where a brooklet led them onward,

Where the trail of deer and bison
Marked the soft mud on the margin,
Till they found all further passage
Shut against them, barred securely
By the trunks of trees uprooted, 120
Lying lengthwise, lying crosswise,
And forbidding further passage.

"We must go back," said the old man,
"O'er these logs we cannot clamber;
Not a woodchuck could get through them,
Not a squirrel clamber o'er them!"
And straightway his pipe he lighted,
And sat down to smoke and ponder.
But before his pipe was finished,
Lo! the path was cleared before him; 130
All the trunks had Kwasind lifted,
To the right hand, to the left hand,
Shot the pine-trees swift as arrows,
Hurled the cedars light as lances.

"Lazy Kwasind!" said the young men,
As they sported in the meadow:
"Why stand idly looking at us,
Leaning on the rock behind you?
Come and wrestle with the others,
Let us pitch the quoit together!" 140

Lazy Kwasind made no answer,
To their challenge made no answer,
Only rose, and slowly turning,
Seized the huge rock in his fingers,
Tore it from its deep foundation,
Poised it in the air a moment,
Pitched it sheer into the river,
Sheer into the swift Pauwating,
Where it still is seen in Summer.

Once as down that foaming river, 150
Down the rapids of Pauwating,
Kwasind sailed with his companions,

In the stream he saw a beaver,
Saw Ahmeek, the King of Beavers,
Struggling with the rushing currents,
Rising, sinking in the water.

Without speaking, without pausing,
Kwasind leaped into the river,
Plunged beneath the bubbling surface,
Through the whirlpools chased the beaver, 160
Followed him among the islands,
Stayed so long beneath the water,
That his terrified companions
Cried, "Alas! good-by to Kwasind!
We shall never more see Kwasind!"
But he reappeared triumphant,
And upon his shining shoulders
Brought the beaver, dead and dripping,
Brought the King of all the Beavers.

And these two, as I have told you, 170
Were the friends of Hiawatha,
Chibiabos, the musician,
And the very strong man, Kwasind.
Long they lived in peace together,
Spake with naked hearts together,
Pondering much and much contriving
How the tribes of men might prosper.

X. HIAWATHA'S WOOING

"As unto the bow the cord is,
So unto the man is woman,
Though she bends him, she obeys him,
Though she draws him, yet she follows,
Useless each without the other!"

Thus the youthful Hiawatha
Said within himself and pondered,
Much perplexed by various feelings,
Listless, longing, hoping, fearing,

Dreaming still of Minnehaha,
Of the lovely Laughing Water,
In the land of the Dacotahs. 10

“Wed a maiden of your people,”
Warning said the old Nokomis;
“Go not eastward, go not westward,
For a stranger, whom we know not!
Like a fire upon the hearth-stone
Is a neighbor’s homely daughter,
Like the starlight or the moonlight
Is the handsomest of strangers!” 20

Thus dissuading spake Nokomis,
And my Hiawatha answered
Only this: “Dear old Nokomis,
Very pleasant is the firelight,
But I like the starlight better,
Better do I like the moonlight!”

Gravely then said old Nokomis:
“Bring not here an idle maiden,
Bring not here a useless woman,
Hands unskilful, feet unwilling; 30
Bring a wife with nimble fingers,
Heart and hand that move together,
Feet that run on willing errands!”

Smiling answered Hiawatha:
“In the land of the Dacotahs
Lives the Arrow-maker’s daughter,
Minnehaha, Laughing Water,
Handsome of all the women.
I will bring her to your wigwam,
She shall run upon your errands, 40
Be your starlight, moonlight, firelight,
Be the sunlight of my people!”

Still dissuading said Nokomis:
“Bring not to my lodge a stranger
From the land of the Dacotahs!
Very fierce are the Dacotahs,

Often is there war between us,
There are feuds yet unforgotten,
Wounds that ache and still may open!"

Laughing answered Hiawatha: 50

"For that reason, if no other,
Would I wed the fair Dacotah,
That our tribes might be united,
That old feuds might be forgotten,
And old wounds be healed forever!"

Thus departed Hiawatha
To the land of the Dacotahs,
To the land of handsome women;
Striding over moor and meadow,
Through interminable forests, 60
Through uninterrupted silence.

With his moccasins of magic,
At each stride a mile he measured;
Yet the way seemed long before him,
And his heart outran his footsteps;
And he journeyed without resting,
Till he heard the cataract's laughter,
Heard the Falls of Minnehaha
Calling to him through the silence.
"Pleasant is the sound!" he murmured, 70
"Pleasant is the voice that calls me!"

On the outskirts of the forest,
'Twixt the shadow and the sunshine,
Herds of fallow deer were feeding,
But they saw not Hiawatha;
To his bow he whispered, "Fail not!"
To his arrow whispered, "Swerve not!"
Sent it singing on its errand,
To the red heart of the roebuck;
Threw the deer across his shoulder, 80
And sped forward without pausing.

At the doorway of his wigwam
Sat the ancient Arrow-maker,

In the land of the Dacotahs,
Making arrow-heads of jasper,
Arrow-heads of chalcedony.
At his side, in all her beauty,
Sat the lovely Minnehaha,
Sat his daughter, Laughing Water,
Plaiting mats of flags and rushes;
Of the past the old man's thoughts were,
And the maiden's of the future.

90

He was thinking, as he sat there,
Of the days when with such arrows
He had struck the deer and bison,
On the Muskoday, the meadow;
Shot the wild goose, flying southward,
On the wing, the clamorous Wawa;
Thinking of the great war-parties,
How they came to buy his arrows,
Could not fight without his arrows.
Ah, no more such noble warriors
Could be found on earth as they were!
Now the men were all like women,
Only used their tongues for weapons!

100

She was thinking of a hunter,
From another tribe and country,
Young and tall and very handsome,
Who one morning, in the Spring-time,
Came to buy her father's arrows,
Sat and rested in the wigwam,
Lingered long about the doorway,
Looking back as he departed.
She had heard her father praise him,
Praise his courage and his wisdom;
Would he come again for arrows
To the Falls of Minnehaha?
On the mat her hands lay idle,
And her eyes were very dreamy.

110

Through their thoughts they heard a footstep, 120

Heard a rustling in the branches,
And with glowing cheek and forehead,
With the deer upon his shoulders,
Suddenly from out the woodlands
Hiawatha stood before them.

Straight the ancient Arrow-maker
Looked up gravely from his labor,
Laid aside the unfinished arrow,
Bade him enter at the doorway,
Saying, as he rose to meet him, 130
"Hiawatha, you are welcome!"

At the feet of Laughing Water
Hiawatha laid his burden,
Threw the red deer from his shoulders;
And the maiden looked up at him,
Looked up from her mat of rushes,
Said with gentle look and accent,
"You are welcome, Hiawatha!"

Very spacious was the wigwam,
Made of deer-skin dressed and whitened, 140
With the Gods of the Dacotahs
Drawn and painted on its curtains,
And so tall the doorway, hardly
Hiawatha stooped to enter,
Hardly touched his eagle-feathers
As he entered at the doorway.

Then uprose the Laughing Water,
From the ground fair Minnehaha,
Laid aside her mat unfinished,
Brought forth food and set before them, 150
Water brought them from the brooklet,
Gave them food in earthen vessels,
Gave them drink in bowls of bass-wood,
Listened while the guest was speaking,
Listened while her father answered,
But not once her lips she opened,
Not a single word she uttered.

Yes, as in a dream she listened
To the words of Hiawatha,
As he talked of old Nokomis, 160
Who had nursed him in his childhood,
As he told of his companions,
Chibiabos, the musician,
And the very strong man, Kwasind,
And of happiness and plenty
In the land of the Ojibways,
In the pleasant land and peaceful.

"After many years of warfare,
Many years of strife and bloodshed,
There is peace between the Ojibways 170
And the tribe of the Dacotahs."
Thus continued Hiawatha,
And then added, speaking slowly,
"That this peace may last forever,
And our hands be clasped more closely,
And our hearts be more united,
Give me as my wife this maiden,
Minnehaha, Laughing Water,
Loveliest of Dacotah women!"

And the ancient Arrow-maker 180
Paused a moment ere he answered,
Smoked a little while in silence,
Looked at Hiawatha proudly,
Fondly looked at Laughing Water,
And made answer very gravely:
"Yes, if Minnehaha wishes;
Let your heart speak, Minnehaha!"

And the lovely Laughing Water
Seemed more lovely, as she stood there,
Neither willing nor reluctant, 190
As she went to Hiawatha,
Softly took the seat beside him,
While she said, and blushed to say it,
"I will follow you, my husband!"

This was Hiawatha's wooing!
Thus it was he won the daughter
Of the ancient Arrow-maker,
In the land of the Dacotahs!

From the wigwam he departed,
Leading with him Laughing Water; 200
Hand in hand they went together,
Through the woodland and the meadow,
Left the old man standing lonely
At the doorway of his wigwam,
Heard the Falls of Minnehaha
Calling to them from the distance,
Crying to them from afar off,
"Fare thee well, O Minnehaha!"

And the ancient Arrow-maker
Turned again unto his labor, 210
Sat down by his sunny doorway,
Murmuring to himself, and saying:
"Thus it is our daughters leave us,
Those we love, and those who love us!
Just when they have learned to help us,
When we are old and lean upon them,
Comes a youth with flaunting feathers,
With his flute of reeds, a stranger
Wanders piping through the village,
Beckons to the fairest maiden, 220
And she follows where he leads her,
Leaving all things for the stranger!"

Pleasant was the journey homeward,
Through interminable forests,
Over meadow, over mountain,
Over river, hill, and hollow.
Short it seemed to Hiawatha,
Though they journeyed very slowly,
Though his pace he checked and slackened
To the steps of Laughing Water. 230
Over wide and rushing rivers

In his arms he bore the maiden;
Light he thought her as a feather,
As the plume upon his head-gear;
Cleared the tangled pathway for her,
Bent aside the swaying branches,
Made at night a lodge of branches,
And a bed with boughs of hemlock,
And a fire before the doorway
With the dry cones of the pine-tree. 240

All the travelling winds went with them,
O'er the meadow, through the forest;
All the stars of night looked at them,
Watched with sleepless eyes their slumber;
From his ambush in the oak-tree
Peeped the squirrel, Adjidaumo,
Watched with eager eyes the lovers;
And the rabbit, the Wabasso,
Scampered from the path before them,
Peering, peeping from his burrow, 250
Sat erect upon his haunches,
Watched with curious eyes the lovers.

Pleasant was the journey homeward!
All the birds sang loud and sweetly
Songs of happiness and heart's-ease;
Sang the bluebird, the Owaissa,
"Happy are you, Hiawatha,
Having such a wife to love you!"
Sang the robin, the Opechee,
"Happy are you, Laughing Water, 260
Having such a noble husband!"

From the sky the sun benignant
Looked upon them through the branches,
Saying to them, "O my children,
Love is sunshine, hate is shadow,
Life is checkered shade and sunshine,
Rule by love, O Hiawatha!"

From the sky the moon looked at them,

Filled the lodge with mystic splendors,
Whispered to them, "O my children, 270
Day is restless, night is quiet,
Man imperious, woman feeble;
Half is mine, although I follow;
Rule by patience, Laughing Water!"

Thus it was they journeyed homeward;
Thus it was that Hiawatha
To the lodge of old Nokomis
Brought the moonlight, starlight, firelight,
Brought the sunshine of his people,
Minnehaha, Laughing Water, 280
Handsome of all the women
In the land of the Dacotahs,
In the land of handsome women.

XI. HIAWATHA'S WEDDING-FEAST

You shall hear how Pau-Puk-Keewis,
How the handsome Yenadizze
Danced at Hiawatha's wedding;
How the gentle Chibiabos,
He the sweetest of musicians,
Sang his songs of love and longing;
How Iagoo, the great boaster,
He the marvellous story-teller,
Told his tales of strange adventure,
That the feast might be more joyous, 10
That the time might pass more gayly,
And the guests be more contented.

Sumptuous was the feast Nokomis
Made at Hiawatha's wedding;
All the bowls were made of bass-wood,
White and polished very smoothly,
All the spoons of horn of bison,
Black and polished very smoothly.

She had sent through all the village

Messengers with wands of willow, 20
As a sign of invitation,
As a token of the feasting;
And the wedding guests assembled,
Clad in all their richest raiment,
Robes of fur and belts of wampum,
Splendid with their paint and plumage,
Beautiful with beads and tassels.

First they ate the sturgeon, Nahma,
And the pike, the Maskenozha,
Caught and cooked by old Nokomis; 30
Then on pemican they feasted,
Pemican and buffalo marrow,
Haunch of deer and hump of bison,
Yellow cakes of the Mondamin,
And the wild rice of the river.

But the gracious Hiawatha,
And the lovely Laughing Water,
And the careful old Nokomis,
Tasted not the food before them,
Only waited on the others, 40
Only served their guests in silence.

And when all the guests had finished,
Old Nokomis, brisk and busy,
From an ample pouch of otter,
Filled the red-stone pipes for smoking
With tobacco from the South-land,
Mixed with bark of the red willow,
And with herbs and leaves of fragrance.

Then she said, "O Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Dance for us your merry dances, 50
Dance the Beggar's Dance to please us,
That the feast may be more joyous,
That the time may pass more gayly,
And our guests be more contented!"

Then the handsome Pau-Puk-Keewis,
He the idle Yenadizze,

He the merry mischief-maker,
Whom the people called the Storm-Fool,
Rose among the guests assembled.

Skilled was he in sports and pastimes, 60
In the merry dance of snow-shoes,
In the play of quoits and ball-play;
Skilled was he in games of hazard,
In all games of skill and hazard,
Pugasaing, the Bowl and Counters,
Kuntassoo, the Game of Plum-stones.

Though the warriors called him Faint-Heart,
Called him coward, Shaugodaya,
Idler, gambler, Yenadizze, 70
Little heeded he their jesting,
Little cared he for their insults,
For the women and the maidens
Loved the handsome Pau-Puk-Keewis.

He was dressed in shirt of doeskin,
White and soft, and fringed with ermine,
All inwrought with beads of wampum;
He was dressed in deer-skin leggings,
Fringed with hedgehog quills and ermine,
And in moccasins of buck-skin,
Thick with quills and beads embroidered. 80
On his head were plumes of swan's down,
On his heels were tails of foxes,
In one hand a fan of feathers,
And a pipe was in the other.

Barred with streaks of red and yellow,
Streaks of blue and bright vermillion,
Shone the face of Pau-Puk-Keewis.
From his forehead fell his tresses,
Smooth, and parted like a woman's,
Shining bright with oil, and plaited, 90
Hung with braids of scented grasses,
As among the guests assembled,
To the sound of flutes and singing,

To the sound of drums and voices,
Rose the handsome Pau-Puk-Keewis,
And began his mystic dances.

First he danced a solemn measure,
Very slow in step and gesture,
In and out among the pine-trees,
Through the shadows and the sunshine, 100
Treading softly like a panther.
Then more swiftly and still swifter,
Whirling, spinning round in circles,
Leaping o'er the guests assembled,
Eddying round and round the wigwam,
Till the leaves went whirling with him,
Till the dust and wind together
Swept in eddies round about him.

Then along the sandy margin
Of the lake, the Big-Sea-Water, 110
On he sped with frenzied gestures,
Stamped upon the sand, and tossed it
Wildly in the air around him;
Till the wind became a whirlwind,
Till the sand was blown and sifted
Like great snowdrifts o'er the landscape,
Heaping all the shores with Sand Dunes,
Sand Hills of the Nagow Wudjoo!

Thus the merry Pau-Puk-Keewis
Danced his Beggar's Dance to please them, 120
And, returning, sat down laughing
There among the guests assembled,
Sat and fanned himself serenely
With his fan of turkey-feathers.

Then they said to Chibiabos,
To the friend of Hiawatha,
To the sweetest of all singers,
To the best of all musicians,
"Sing to us, O Chibiabos!
Songs of love and songs of longing, 130

That the feast may be more joyous,
That the time may pass more gayly,
And our guests be more contented!"

And the gentle Chibiabos
Sang in accents sweet and tender,
Sang in tones of deep emotion,
Songs of love and songs of longing;
Looking still at Hiawatha,
Looking at fair Laughing Water,
Sang he softly, sang in this wise:

140

"Onaway! Awake, beloved!
Thou the wild-flower of the forest!
Thou the wild-bird of the prairie!
Thou with eyes so soft and fawn-like!

"If thou only lookest at me,
I am happy, I am happy,
As the lilies of the prairie,
When they feel the dew upon them!

"Sweet thy breath is as the fragrance
Of the wild-flowers in the morning,
As their fragrance is at evening,
In the Moon when leaves are falling.

150

"Does not all the blood within me
Leap to meet thee, leap to meet thee,
As the springs to meet the sunshine,
In the Moon when nights are brightest?

"Onaway! my heart sings to thee,
Sings with joy when thou art near me,
As the sighing, singing branches
In the pleasant Moon of Strawberries!

160

"When thou art not pleased, beloved,
Then my heart is sad and darkened,
As the shining river darkens
When the clouds drop shadows on it!

"When thou smilest, my beloved,
Then my troubled heart is brightened,
As in sunshine gleam the ripples

That the cold wind makes in rivers.

“Smiles the earth, and smile the waters,

Smile the cloudless skies above us,

170

But I lose the way of smiling

When thou art no longer near me!

“I myself, myself! behold me!

Blood of my beating heart, behold me!

O awake, awake, beloved!

Onaway! awake, beloved!”

Thus the gentle Chibiabos

Sang his song of love and longing;

And Iagoo, the great boaster,

He the marvellous story-teller,

180

He the friend of old Nokomis,

Jealous of the sweet musician,

Jealous of the applause they gave him,

Saw in all the eyes around him,

Saw in all their looks and gestures,

That the wedding guests assembled

Longed to hear his pleasant stories,

His immeasurable falsehoods.

Very boastful was Iagoo;

Never heard he an adventure

190

But himself had met a greater;

Never any deed of daring

But himself had done a bolder;

Never any marvellous story

But himself could tell a stranger.

Would you listen to his boasting,

Would you only give him credence,

No one ever shot an arrow

Half so far and high as he had;

Ever caught so many fishes,

200

Ever killed so many reindeer,

Ever trapped so many beaver!

None could run so fast as he could,

None could dive so deep as he could,

None could swim so far as he could;
None had made so many journeys,
None had seen so many wonders,
As this wonderful Iagoo,
As this marvellous story-teller!

Thus his name became a by-word 210
And a jest among the people;
And whene'er a boastful hunter
Praised his own address too highly,
Or a warrior, home returning,
Talked too much of his achievements,
All his hearers cried, "Iagoo!
Here's Iagoo come among us!"

He it was who carved the cradle
Of the little Hiawatha,
Carved its framework out of linden, 220
Bound it strong with reindeer sinews;
He it was who taught him later
How to make his bows and arrows,
How to make the bows of ash-tree,
And the arrows of the oak-tree.
So among the guests assembled
At my Hiawatha's wedding
Sat Iagoo, old and ugly,
Sat the marvellous story-teller.

And they said, "O good Iagoo, 230
Tell us now a tale of wonder,
Tell us of some strange adventure,
That the feast may be more joyous,
That the time may pass more gayly,
And our guests be more contented!"

And Iagoo answered straightway,
"You shall hear a tale of wonder,
You shall hear the strange adventures
Of Osseo, the Magician,
From the Evening Star descended." 240

XX. THE FAMINE

O the long and dreary Winter!
O the cold and cruel Winter!
Ever thicker, thicker, thicker
Froze the ice on lake and river,
Ever deeper, deeper, deeper
Fell the snow o'er all the landscape,
Fell the covering snow, and drifted
Through the forest, round the village.

Hardly from his buried wigwam
Could the hunter force a passage;
With his mittens and his snow-shoes
Vainly walked he through the forest,
Sought for bird or beast and found none,
Saw no track of deer or rabbit,
In the snow beheld no footprints,
In the ghastly, gleaming forest
Fell, and could not rise from weakness,
Perished there from cold and hunger.

10

O the famine and the fever!
O the wasting of the famine!
O the blasting of the fever!
O the wailing of the children!
O the anguish of the women!

20

All the earth was sick and famished;
Hungry was the air around them,
Hungry was the sky above them,
And the hungry stars in heaven
Like the eyes of wolves glared at them!

Into Hiawatha's wigwam
Came two other guests, as silent
As the ghosts were, and as gloomy,
Waited not to be invited,
Did not parley at the doorway,
Sat there without word of welcome
In the seat of Laughing Water;

30

Looked with haggard eyes and hollow
At the face of Laughing Water.

And the foremost said: "Behold me!
I am Famine, Bukadawin!"

And the other said: "Behold me!
I am Fever, Ahkosewin!"

40

And the lovely Minnehaha
Shuddered as they looked upon her,
Shuddered at the words they uttered,
Lay down on her bed in silence,
Hid her face, but made no answer;
Lay there trembling, freezing, burning
At the looks they cast upon her,
At the fearful words they uttered.

Forth into the empty forest
Rushed the maddened Hiawatha;
In his heart was deadly sorrow,
In his face a stony firmness;
On his brow the sweat of anguish
Started, but it froze and fell not.

50

Wrapped in furs and armed for hunting,
With his mighty bow of ash-tree,
With his quiver full of arrows,
With his mittens, Minjekahwun,
Into the vast and vacant forest
On his snow-shoes strode he forward.

60

"Gitche Manito, the Mighty!"
Cried he with his face uplifted
In that bitter hour of anguish,
"Give your children food, O father!
Give us food, or we must perish!
Give me food for Minnehaha,
For my dying Minnehaha!"

Through the far-resounding forest,
Through the forest vast and vacant
Rang that cry of desolation,
But there came no other answer

70

Than the echo of his crying,
Than the echo of the woodlands,
"Minnehaha! Minnehaha!"

All day long roved Hiawatha
In that melancholy forest,
Through the shadow of whose thickets,
In the pleasant days of Summer,
Of that ne'er forgotten Summer, 80
He had brought his young wife homeward
From the land of the Dacotahs;
When the birds sang in the thickets,
And the streamlets laughed and glistened,
And the air was full of fragrance,
And the lovely Laughing Water
Said with voice that did not tremble,
"I will follow you, my husband!"

In the wigwam with Nokomis,
With those gloomy guests that watched her, 90
With the Famine and the Fever,
She was lying, the Beloved,
She, the dying Minnehaha.

"Hark!" she said; "I hear a rushing,
Hear a roaring and a rushing,
Hear the Falls of Minnehaha
Calling to me from a distance!"
"No, my child!" said old Nokomis,
"'T is the night-wind in the pine-trees!"

"Look!" she said; "I see my father 100
Standing lonely at his doorway,
Beckoning to me from his wigwam
In the land of the Dacotahs!"

"No, my child!" said old Nokomis,
"'T is the smoke, that waves and beckons!"

"Ah!" said she, "the eyes of Pauguk
Glare upon me in the darkness,
I can feel his icy fingers
Clasping mine amid the darkness!

Hiawatha! Hiawatha!"

110

And the desolate Hiawatha,
Far away amid the forest,
Miles away among the mountains,
Heard that sudden cry of anguish,
Heard the voice of Minnehaha
Calling to him in the darkness,
"Hiawatha! Hiawatha!"

Over snow-fields waste and pathless,
Under snow-encumbered branches,
Homeward hurried Hiawatha,
Empty-handed, heavy-hearted,
Heard Nokomis moaning, wailing:
"Wahonowin! Wahonowin!
Would that I had perished for you,
Would that I were dead as you are!
Wahonowin! Wahonowin!"

120

And he rushed into the wigwam,
Saw the old Nokomis slowly
Rocking to and fro and moaning,
Saw his lovely Minnehaha
Lying dead and cold before him,
And his bursting heart within him
Uttered such a cry of anguish,
That the forest moaned and shuddered,
That the very stars in heaven
Shook and trembled with his anguish.

130

Then he sat down, still and speechless,
On the bed of Minnehaha,
At the feet of Laughing Water,
At those willing feet, that never
More would lightly run to meet him,
Never more would lightly follow.

140

With both hands his face he covered,
Seven long days and nights he sat there,
As if in a swoon he sat there,

Speechless, motionless, unconscious
Of the daylight or the darkness.

Then they buried Minnehaha;
In the snow a grave they made her,
In the forest deep and darksome,
Underneath the moaning hemlocks;
Clothed her in her richest garments,
Wrapped her in her robes of ermine,
Covered her with snow, like ermine;
Thus they buried Minnehaha.

150

And at night a fire was lighted,
On her grave four times was kindled,
For her soul upon its journey
To the Islands of the Blessed.
From his doorway Hiawatha
Saw it burning in the forest,
Lighting up the gloomy hemlocks;
From his sleepless bed uprising,
From the bed of Minnehaha,
Stood and watched it at the doorway,
That it might not be extinguished,
Might not leave her in the darkness.

160

"Farewell!" said he, "Minnehaha!
Farewell, O my Laughing Water!
All my heart is buried with you,
All my thoughts go onward with you!
Come not back again to labor,
Come not back again to suffer,
Where the Famine and the Fever
Wear the heart and waste the body.
Soon my task will be completed,
Soon your footsteps I shall follow
To the Islands of the Blessed,
To the Kingdom of Ponemah,
To the Land of the Hereafter!"

170

180

XXI. THE WHITE MAN'S FOOT

In his lodge beside a river,
Close beside a frozen river,
Sat an old man, sad and lonely.
White his hair was as a snow-drift;
Dull and low his fire was burning,
And the old man shook and trembled,
Folded in his Waubewyon,
In his tattered white-skin-wrapper,
Hearing nothing but the tempest
As it roared along the forest,
Seeing nothing but the snow-storm,
As it whirled and hissed and drifted.

10

All the coals were white with ashes,
And the fire was slowly dying,
As a young man, walking lightly,
At the open doorway entered.
Red with blood of youth his cheeks were,
Soft his eyes, as stars in Spring-time,
Bound his forehead was with grasses,
Bound and plumed with scented grasses;
On his lips a smile of beauty,
Filling all the lodge with sunshine,
In his hand a bunch of blossoms,
Filling all the lodge with sweetness.

20

"Ah, my son!" exclaimed the old man,
"Happy are my eyes to see you.
Sit here on the mat beside me,
Sit here by the dying embers,
Let us pass the night together.
Tell me of your strange adventures,
Of the lands where you have travelled;
I will tell you of my prowess,
Of my many deeds of wonder."

30

From his nouch he drew his peace-pipe.

Made of red stone was the pipe-head,
And the stem a reed with feathers;
Filled the pipe with bark of willow,
Placed a burning coal upon it,
Gave it to his guest, the stranger, 40
And began to speak in this wise:
"When I blow my breath about me,
When I breathe upon the landscape,
Motionless are all the rivers,
Hard as stone becomes the water!"

And the young man answered, smiling:
"When I blow my breath about me,
When I breathe upon the landscape,
Flowers spring up o'er all the meadows,
Singing, onward rush the rivers!" 50

"When I shake my hoary tresses,"
Said the old man darkly frowning,
"All the land with snow is covered;
All the leaves from all the branches
Fall and fade and die and wither,
For I breathe, and lo! they are not.
From the waters and the marshes
Rise the wild goose and the heron,
Fly away to distant regions,
For I speak, and lo! they are not. 60
And where'er my footsteps wander,
All the wild beasts of the forest
Hide themselves in holes and caverns,
And the earth becomes as flintstone!"

"When I shake my flowing ringlets,"
Said the young man, softly laughing,
"Showers of rain fall warm and welcome,
Plants lift up their heads rejoicing,
Back unto their lakes and marshes
Come the wild goose and the heron, 70
Homeward shoots the arrowy swallow,
Sing the bluebird and the robin,

And where'er my footsteps wander,
All the meadows wave with blossoms,
All the woodlands ring with music,
All the trees are dark with foliage!"

While they spake, the night departed:
From the distant realms of Wabun,
From his shining lodge of silver,
Like a warrior robed and painted,
Came the sun, and said, "Behold me
Gheezis, the great sun, behold me!"

80

Then the old man's tongue was speechless
And the air grew warm and pleasant,
And upon the wigwam sweetly
Sang the bluebird and the robin,
And the stream began to murmur,
And a scent of growing grasses
Through the lodge was gently wafted.

And Segwun, the youthful stranger,
More distinctly in the daylight
Saw the icy face before him;
It was Peboan, the Winter!

90

From his eyes the tears were flowing,
As from melting lakes the streamlets,
And his body shrunk and dwindled
As the shouting sun ascended,
Till into the air it faded,
Till into the ground it vanished,
And the young man saw before him,
On the hearth-stone of the wigwam,
Where the fire had smoked and smouldered,
Saw the earliest flower of Spring-time,
Saw the Beauty of the Spring-time,
Saw the Miskodeed in blossom.

100

Thus it was that in the North-land
After that unheard-of coldness,
That intolerable Winter,
Came the Spring with all its splendor,

All its birds and all its blossoms, 110
All its flowers and leaves and grasses.

Sailing on the wind to northward,
Flying in great flocks, like arrows,
Like huge arrows shot through heaven,
Passed the swan, the Mahnahbezee,
Speaking almost as a man speaks;
And in long lines waving, bending
Like a bow-string snapped asunder,
Came the white goose, Waw-be-wawa;
And in pairs, or singly flying, 120
Mahng the loon, with clangorous pinions,
The blue heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,
And the grouse, the Mushkodasa.

In the thickets and the meadows
Piped the bluebird, the Owaissa,
On the summit of the lodges
Sang the robin, the Opechee,
In the covert of the pine-trees
Cooed the pigeon, the Omemee;
And the sorrowing Hiawatha, 130
Speechless in his infinite sorrow,
Heard their voices calling to him,
Went forth from his gloomy doorway,
Stood and gazed into the heaven,
Gazed upon the earth and waters.

From his wanderings far to eastward,
From the regions of the morning,
From the shining land of Wabun,
Homeward now returned Iagoo,
The great traveller, the great boaster, 140
Full of new and strange adventures,
Marvels many and many wonders.

And the people of the village
Listened to him as he told them
Of his marvellous adventures,
Laughing answered him in this wise:

"Ugh! it is indeed Iagoo!
No one else beholds such wonders!"

He had seen, he said, a water
Bigger than the Big-Sea-Water, 150
Broader than the Gitche Gumee,
Bitter so that none could drink it!
At each other looked the warriors,
Looked the women at each other,
Smiled, and said, "It cannot be so!
Kaw!" they said, "it cannot be so!"

O'er it, said he, o'er this water
Came a great canoe with pinions,
A canoe with wings came flying,
Bigger than a grove of pine-trees, 160
Taller than the tallest tree-tops!
And the old men and the women
Looked and tittered at each other;
"Kaw!" they said, "we don't believe it!"

From its mouth, he said, to greet him,
Came Waywassimo, the lightning,
Came the thunder, Annemeekee!
And the warriors and the women
Laughed aloud at poor Iagoo;
"Kaw!" they said, "what tales you tell us!" 170

In it, said he, came a people,
In the great canoe with pinions
Came, he said, a hundred warriors;
Painted white were all their faces
And with hair their chins were covered!
And the warriors and the women
Laughed and shouted in derision,
Like the ravens on the tree-tops,
Like the crows upon the hemlocks.
"Kaw!" they said, "what lies you tell us!" 180
Do not think that we believe them!"

Only Hiawatha laughed not,
But he gravely spake and answered

To their jeering and their jesting:

“True is all Iagoo tells us;

I have seen it in a vision,

Seen the great canoe with pinions,

Seen the people with white faces,

Seen the coming of this bearded

People of the wooden vessel

190

From the regions of the morning,

From the shining land of Wabun.

“Gitche Manito, the Mighty,

The Great Spirit, the Creator,

Sends them hither on his errand,

Sends them to us with his message.

Wheresoe’er they move, before them

Swarms the stinging fly, the Ahmo,

Swarms the bee, the honey-maker;

Wheresoe’er they tread, beneath them

200

Springs a flower unknown among us,

Springs the White-man’s Foot in blossom.

“Let us welcome, then, the strangers,

Hail them as our friends and brothers,

And the heart’s right hand of friendship

Give them when they come to see us.

Gitche Manito, the Mighty,

Said this to me in my vision.

“I beheld, too, in that vision

All the secrets of the future,

210

Of the distant days that shall be.

I beheld the westward marches

Of the unknown, crowded nations.

All the land was full of people,

Restless, struggling, toiling, striving,

Speaking many tongues, yet feeling

But one heart-beat in their bosoms.

In the woodlands rang their axes,

Smoked their towns in all the valleys,

Over all the lakes and rivers

220

Rushed their great canoes of thunder.

“Then a darker, drearier vision
Passed before me, vague and cloud-like;
I beheld our nation scattered,
All forgetful of my counsels,
Weakened, warring with each other:
Saw the remnants of our people
Sweeping westward, wild and woful,
Like the cloud-rack of a tempest,
Like the withered leaves of Autumn!”

230

XXII. HIAWATHA'S DEPARTURE

By the shore of Gitche Gumee,
By the shining Big-Sea-Water,
At the doorway of his wigwam,
In the pleasant Summer morning,
Hiawatha stood and waited.

All the air was full of freshness,
All the earth was bright and joyous,
And before him, through the sunshine,
Westward toward the neighboring forest
Passed in golden swarms the Ahmo,
Passed the bees, the honey-makers,
Burning, singing in the sunshine.

10

Bright above him shone the heavens,
Level spread the lake before him;
From its bosom leaped the sturgeon,
Sparkling, flashing in the sunshine;
On its margin the great forest
Stood reflected in the water,
Every tree-top had its shadow,
Motionless beneath the water.

20

From the brow of Hiawatha
Gone was every trace of sorrow,
As the fog from off the water,
As the mist from off the meadow.
With a smile of joy and triumph,

With a look of exultation,
As of one who in a vision
Sees what is to be, but is not,
Stood and waited Hiawatha.

Toward the sun his hands were lifted, 30
Both the palms spread out against it,
And between the parted fingers
Fell the sunshine on his features,
Flecked with light his naked shoulders,
As it falls and flecks an oak-tree
Through the rifted leaves and branches.

O'er the water floating, flying,
Something in the hazy distance,
Something in the mists of morning,
Loomed and lifted from the water, 40
Now seemed floating, now seemed flying,
Coming nearer, nearer, nearer.

Was it Shingebis the diver?
Or the pelican, the Shada?
Or the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah?
Or the white goose, Waw-be-wawa,
With the water dripping, flashing,
From its glossy neck and feathers?

It was neither goose nor diver,
Neither pelican nor heron, 50
O'er the water floating, flying,
Through the shining mist of morning,
But a birch canoe with paddles,
Rising, sinking on the water,
Dripping, flashing in the sunshine;
And within it came a people
From the distant land of Wabun,
From the farthest realms of morning
Came the Black-Robe chief, the Prophet,
He the Priest of Prayer, the Pale-face, 60
With his guides and his companions.

And the noble Hiawatha,

With his hands aloft extended,
Held aloft in sign of welcome,
Waited, full of exultation,
Till the birch canoe with paddles
Grated on the shining pebbles,
Stranded on the sandy margin,
Till the Black-Robe chief, the Pale-face,
With the cross upon his bosom, 70
Landed on the sandy margin.

Then the joyous Hiawatha
Cried aloud and spake in this wise:
"Beautiful is the sun, O strangers,
When you come so far to see us!
All our town in peace awaits you,
All our doors stand open for you;
You shall enter all our wigwams,
For the heart's right hand we give you.

"Never bloomed the earth so gayly, 80
Never shone the sun so brightly,
As to-day they shine and blossom
When you come so far to see us!
Never was our lake so tranquil,
Nor so free from rocks and sand-bars;
For your birch canoe in passing
Has removed both rock and sand-bar.

"Never before had our tobacco
Such a sweet and pleasant flavor,
Never the broad leaves of our cornfields 90
Were so beautiful to look on,
As they seem to us this morning,
When you come so far to see us!"

And the Black-Robe chief made answer,
Stammered in his speech a little,
Speaking words yet unfamiliar:
"Peace be with you, Hiawatha,
Peace be with you and your people,
Peace of prayer, and peace of pardon,

Peace of Christ, and joy of Mary!"

100

Then the generous Hiawatha
Led the strangers to his wigwam,
Seated them on skins of bison,
Seated them on skins of ermine,
And the careful, old Nokomis
Brought them food in bowls of basswood,
Water brought in birchen dippers,
And the calumet, the peace-pipe,
Filled and lighted for their smoking.

All the old men of the village,
All the warriors of the nation,
All the Jossakeeds, the prophets,
The magicians, the Wabenos,
And the medicine-men, the Medas,
Came to bid the strangers welcome;
"It is well," they said, "O brothers,
That you come so far to see us!"

110

In a circle round the doorway,
With their pipes they sat in silence,
Waiting to behold the strangers,
Waiting to receive their message;
Till the Black-Robe chief, the Pale-face,
From the wigwam came to greet them,
Stammering in his speech a little,
Speaking words yet unfamiliar;
"It is well," they said, "O brother,
That you come so far to see us!"

120

Then the Black-Robe chief, the Prophet,
Told his message to the people,
Told the purport of his mission,
Told them of the Virgin Mary,
And her blessed Son, the Saviour,
How in distant lands and ages
He had lived on earth as we do;
How he fasted, prayed, and labored;
How the Jews, the tribe accursed,

130

Mocked him, scourged him, crucified him;
How he rose from where they laid him,
Walked again with his disciples,
And ascended into heaven. 140

And the chiefs made answer, saying:
"We have listened to your message,
We have heard your words of wisdom,
We will think on what you tell us.
It is well for us, O brothers,
That you come so far to see us!"

Then they rose up and departed
Each one homeward to his wigwam,
To the young men and the women
Told the story of the strangers 150
Whom the Master of Life had sent them
From the shining land of Wabun.

Heavy with the heat and silence
Grew the afternoon of Summer;
With a drowsy sound the forest
Whispered round the sultry wigwam,
With a sound of sleep the water
Rippled on the beach below it;
From the cornfields shrill and ceaseless
Sang the grasshopper, Pah-puk-keena; 160
And the guests of Hiawatha,
Weary with the heat of Summer,
Slumbered in the sultry wigwam.

Slowly o'er the simmering landscape
Fell the evening's dusk and coolness,
And the long and level sunbeams
Shot their spears into the forest,
Breaking through its shields of shadow,
Rushed into each secret ambush,
Searched each thicket, dingle, hollow; 170
Still the guests of Hiawatha
Slumbered in the silent wigwam.

From his place rose Hiawatha,

Bade farewell to old Nokomis,
Spake in whispers, spake in this wise,
Did not wake the guests, that slumbered:

“I am going, O Nokomis,
On a long and distant journey,
To the portals of the Sunset,
To the regions of the home-wind,
Of the Northwest-wind, Keewaydin.
But these guests I leave behind me,
In your watch and ward I leave them;
See that never harm comes near them,
See that never fear molests them,
Never danger nor suspicion,
Never want of food or shelter,
In the lodge of Hiawatha!”

180

Forth into the village went he,
Bade farewell to all the warriors,
Bade farewell to all the young men,
Spake persuading, spake in this wise:

190

“I am going, O my people,
On a long and distant journey;
Many moons and many winters
Will have come, and will have vanished,
Ere I come again to see you.
But my guests I leave behind me;
Listen to their words of wisdom,
Listen to the truth they tell you,
For the Master of Life has sent them
From the land of light and morning!”

200

On the shore stood Hiawatha,
Turned and waved his hand at parting;
On the clear and luminous water
Launched his birch canoe for sailing,
From the pebbles of the margin
Shoved it forth into the water;
Whispered to it, “Westward! westward!”
And with speed it darted forward.

210

And the evening sun descending
Set the clouds on fire with redness,
Burned the broad sky, like a prairie,
Left upon the level water
One long track and trail of splendor,
Down whose stream, as down a river,
Westward, westward Hiawatha
Sailed into the fiery sunset,
Sailed into the purple vapors,
Sailed into the dusk of evening.

220

And the people from the margin
Watched him floating, rising, sinking,
Till the birch canoe seemed lifted
High into that sea of splendor,
Till it sank into the vapors
Like the new moon slowly, slowly
Sinking in the purple distance.

And they said, "Farewell forever!"
Said, "Farewell, O Hiawatha!"
And the forests, dark and lonely,
Moved through all their depths of darkness,
Sighed, "Farewell, O Hiawatha!"
And the waves upon the margin
Rising, rippling on the pebbles,
Sobbed, "Farewell, O Hiawatha!"
And the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,
From her haunts among the fen-lands,
Screamed, "Farewell, O Hiawatha!"

230

Thus departed Hiawatha,
Hiawatha the Beloved,
In the glory of the sunset,
In the purple mists of evening,
To the regions of the home-wind,
Of the Northwest-Wind, Keewaydin,
To the Islands of the Blessed,
To the Kingdom of Ponemah,
To the Land of the Hereafter!

240

1855

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

I. MILES STANDISH

In the Old Colony days, in Plymouth the land of the Pilgrims,
To and fro in a room of his simple and primitive dwelling,
Clad in doublet and hose, and boots of Cordovan leather,
Strode, with a martial air, Miles Standish the Puritan Captain.
Buried in thought he seemed, with his hands behind him, and
pausing

Ever and anon to behold his glittering weapons of warfare,
Hanging in shining array along the walls of the chamber,—
Cutlass and corselet of steel, and his trusty sword of Damascus,
Curved at the point and inscribed with its mystical Arabic
sentence,

While underneath, in a corner, were fowling-piece, musket,
and matchlock. 10

Short of stature he was, but strongly built and athletic,
Broad in the shoulders, deep-chested, with muscles and
sinews of iron;

Brown as a nut was his face, but his russet beard was already
Flaked with patches of snow, as hedges sometimes in No-
vember.

Near him was seated John Alden, his friend and household
companion,

Writing with diligent speed at a table of pine by the window;
Fair-haired, azure-eyed, with delicate Saxon complexion,
Having the dew of his youth, and the beauty thereof, as the
captives

Whom Saint Gregory saw, and exclaimed, "Not Angels, but
Angels."

Youngest of all was he of the men who came in the May-
flower. 20

Suddenly breaking the silence, the diligent scribe inter-
rupting,
Spake, in the pride of his heart, Miles Standish the Captain of
Plymouth.

"Look at these arms," he said, "the warlike weapons that hang
here

Burnished and bright and clean, as if for parade or inspection!
This is the sword of Damascus I fought with in Flanders; this
breastplate,

Well I remember the day! once saved my life in a skirmish;

Here in front you can see the very dint of the bullet

Fired point-blank at my heart by a Spanish arcabucero.

Had it not been of sheer steel, the forgotten bones of Miles
Standish

Would at this moment be mould, in their grave in the Flemish
morasses." 30

Thereupon answered John Alden, but looked not up from
his writing:

"Truly the breath of the Lord hath slackened the speed of the
bullet;

He in his mercy preserved you, to be our shield and our
weapon!"

Still the Captain continued, unheeding the words of the strip-
pling:

"See, how bright they are burnished, as if in an arsenal hanging;
That is because I have done it myself, and not left it to
others.

Serve yourself, would you be well served, is an excellent adage;
So I take care of my arms, as you of your pens and your ink-
horn.

Then, too, there are my soldiers, my great, invincible army,
Twelve men, all equipped, having each his rest and his match-
lock, 40

Eighteen shillings a month, together with diet and pillage,
And, like Cæsar, I know the name of each of my soldiers!"

This he said with a smile, that danced in his eyes, as the sun-
beams

Dance on the waves of the sea, and vanish again in a moment.

Alden laughed as he wrote, and still the Captain continued:

"Look! you can see from this window my brazen howitzer
planted

High on the roof of the church, a preacher who speaks to the
purpose,
Steady, straightforward, and strong, with irresistible logic,
Orthodox, flashing conviction right into the hearts of the
heathen.
Now we are ready, I think, for any assault of the Indians; 50
Let them come, if they like, and the sooner they try it the
better,—
Let them come, if they like, be it sagamore, sachem, or pow-
wow,
Aspinet, Samoset, Corbitant, Squanto, or Tokamahamon!"

Long at the window he stood, and wistfully gazed on the
landscape,
Washed with a cold gray mist, the vapory breath of the east-
wind,
Forest and meadow and hill, and the steel-blue rim of the
ocean,
Lying silent and sad, in the afternoon shadows and sunshine.
Over his countenance flitted a shadow like those on the land-
scape,
Gloom intermingled with light; and his voice was subdued
with emotion,
Tenderness, pity, regret, as after a pause he proceeded: 60
"Yonder there, on the hill by the sea, lies buried Rose Standish;
Beautiful rose of love, that bloomed for me by the wayside!
She was the first to die of all who came in the Mayflower!
Green above her is growing the field of wheat we have sown
there,
Better to hide from the Indian scouts the graves of our people,
Lest they should count them and see how many already have
perished!"
Sadly his face he averted, and strode up and down, and was
thoughtful.

Fixed to the opposite wall was a shelf of books, and among
them

Prominent three, distinguished alike for bulk and for binding;
 Bariffe's Artillery Guide, and the Commentaries of Cæsar 70
 Out of the Latin translated by Arthur Goldinge of London,
 And, as if guarded by these, between them was standing the
 Bible.

Musing a moment before them, Miles Standish paused, as if
 doubtful

Which of the three he should choose for his consolation and
 comfort,

Whether the wars of the Hebrews, the famous campaigns of
 the Romans,

Or the Artillery practice, designed for belligerent Christians.
 Finally down from its shelf he dragged the ponderous Roman,
 Seated himself at the window, and opened the book, and in
 silence

Turned o'er the well-worn leaves, where thumb-marks thick
 on the margin,

Like the trample of feet, proclaimed the battle was hottest. 80
 Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying pen of the
 stripling,

Busily writing epistles important, to go by the Mayflower,
 Ready to sail on the morrow, or next day at latest, God willing!
 Homeward bound with the tidings of all that terrible winter,
 Letters written by Alden, and full of the name of Priscilla!
 Full of the name and the fame of the Puritan maiden Priscilla!

II. LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying pen of the
 stripling,

Or an occasional sigh from the laboring heart of the Captain,
 Reading the marvellous words and achievements of Julius
 Cæsar.

After a while he exclaimed, as he smote with his hand, palm
 downwards, 90

Heavily on the page: "A wonderful man was this Cæsar!
 You are a writer, and I am a fighter, but here is a fellow

Who could both write and fight, and in both was equally skilful!"

Straightway answered and spake John Alden, the comely, the youthful:

"Yes, he was equally skilled, as you say, with his pen and his weapons.

Somewhere have I read, but where I forget, he could dictate Seven letters at once, at the same time writing his memoirs."

"Truly," continued the Captain, not heeding or hearing the other,

"Truly a wonderful man was Caius Julius Cæsar!

Better be first, he said, in a little Iberian village, 100

Than be second in Rome, and I think he was right when he said it.

Twice was he married before he was twenty, and many times after;

Battles five hundred he fought, and a thousand cities he conquered;

He, too, fought in Flanders, as he himself has recorded;

Finally he was stabbed by his friend, the orator Brutus!

Now, do you know what he did on a certain occasion in Flanders,

When the rear-guard of his army retreated, the front giving way too,

And the immortal Twelfth Legion was crowded so closely together

There was no room for their swords? Why, he seized a shield from a soldier,

Put himself straight at the head of his troops, and commanded the captains, 110

Calling on each by his name, to order forward the ensigns;

Then to widen the ranks, and give more room for their weapons;

So he won the day, the battle of something-or-other.

That's what I always say; if you wish a thing to be well done,

You must do it yourself, you must not leave it to others!"

All was silent again; the Captain continued his reading.
Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying pen of the stripling

Writing epistles important to go next day by the Mayflower,
Filled with the name and the fame of the Puritan maiden
Priscilla; 119

Every sentence began or closed with the name of Priscilla,
Till the treacherous pen, to which he confided the secret,
Strove to betray it by singing and shouting the name of
Priscilla!

Finally closing his book, with a bang of the ponderous cover,
Sudden and loud as the sound of a soldier grounding his
musket,

Thus to the young man spake Miles Standish the Captain of
Plymouth:

"When you have finished your work, I have something important to tell you.

Be not however in haste; I can wait; I shall not be impatient!"
Straightway Alden replied, as he folded the last of his letters,
Pushing his papers aside, and giving respectful attention:

"Speak; for whenever you speak, I am always ready to listen,¹³⁰
Always ready to hear whatever pertains to Miles Standish."

Thereupon answered the Captain, embarrassed, and culling
his phrases:

"'T is not good for a man to be alone, say the Scriptures.

This I have said before, and again and again I repeat it;

Every hour in the day, I think it, and feel it, and say it.

Since Rose Standish died, my life has been weary and dreary;
Sick at heart have I been, beyond the healing of friendship.

Oft in my lonely hours have I thought of the maiden Priscilla.
She is alone in the world; her father and mother and brother

Died in the winter together; I saw her going and coming, ¹⁴⁰
Now to the grave of the dead, and now to the bed of the
dying,

Patient, courageous, and strong, and said to myself, that if
ever

There were angels on earth, as there are angels in heaven,

Two have I seen and known; and the angel whose name is
Priscilla .

Holds in my desolate life the place which the other abandoned.
Long have I cherished the thought, but never have dared to
reveal it,

Being a coward in this, though valiant enough for the most
part.

Go to the damsel Priscilla, the loveliest maiden of Plymouth,
Say that a blunt old Captain, a man not of words but of actions,
Offers his hand and his heart, the hand and heart of a sol-
dier.

150

Not in these words, you know, but this in short is my meaning;
I am a maker of war, and not a maker of phrases.

You, who are bred as a scholar, can say it in elegant language,
Such as you read in your books of the pleadings and wooings
of lovers,

Such as you think best adapted to win the heart of a maiden."

When he had spoken, John Alden, the fair-haired, taciturn
stripling,

All aghast at his words, surprised, embarrassed, bewildered,
Trying to mask his dismay by treating the subject with light-
ness,

Trying to smile, and yet feeling his heart stand still in his
bosom,

Just as a timepiece stops in a house that is stricken by light-
ning,

160

Thus made answer and spake, or rather stammered than
answered:

"Such a message as that, I am sure I should mangle and mar it;
If you would have it well done,—I am only repeating your
maxim,—

You must do it yourself, you must not leave it to others!"

But with the air of a man whom nothing can turn from his
purpose,

Gravely shaking his head, made answer the Captain of Plym-
outh:

"Truly the maxim is good, and I do not mean to gainsay it;
But we must use it discreetly, and not waste powder for
nothing.

Now, as I said before, I was never a maker of phrases.

I can march up to a fortress and summon the place to sur-
render, 170

But march up to a woman with such a proposal, I dare not.

I'm not afraid of bullets, nor shot from the mouth of a cannon,
But of a thundering 'No!' point-blank from the mouth of a
woman,

That I confess I'm afraid of, nor am I ashamed to confess it!

So you must grant my request, for you are an elegant scholar,
Having the graces of speech, and skill in the turning of
phrases."

Taking the hand of his friend, who still was reluctant and
doubtful,

Holding it long in his own, and pressing it kindly, he added:

"Though I have spoken thus lightly, yet deep is the feeling
that prompts me;

Surely you cannot refuse what I ask in the name of our
friendship!" 180

Then made answer John Alden: "The name of friendship is
sacred;

What you demand in that name. I have not the power to deny
you!"

So the strong will prevailed, subduing and moulding the
gentler,

Friendship prevailed over love, and Alden went on his errand.

III. THE LOVER'S ERRAND

So the strong will prevailed, and Alden went on his errand,
Out of the street of the village, and into the paths of the forest,
Into the tranquil woods, where bluebirds and robins were
building

Towns in the populous trees, with hanging gardens of ver-
dure,

Peaceful, aerial cities of joy and affection and freedom.
All around him was calm, but within him commotion and
 conflict, 190
Love contending with friendship, and self with each generous
 impulse.
To and fro in his breast his thoughts were heaving and
 dashing,
As in a foundering ship, with every roll of the vessel,
Washes the bitter sea, the merciless surge of the ocean!
"Must I relinquish it all," he cried with a wild lamentation,—
"Must I relinquish it all, the joy, the hope, the illusion?
Was it for this I have loved, and waited, and worshipped in
 silence?
Was it for this I have followed the flying feet and the shadow
Over the wintry sea, to the desolate shores of New England?
Truly the heart is deceitful, and out of its depths of cor-
 ruption 200
Rise, like an exhalation, the misty phantoms of passion;
Angels of light they seem, but are only delusions of Satan.
All is clear to me now; I feel it, I see it distinctly!
This is the hand of the Lord; it is laid upon me in anger,
For I have followed too much the heart's desires and devices,
Worshipping Astaroth blindly, and impious idols of Baal.
This is the cross I must bear; the sin and the swift retribution."

So through the Plymouth woods John Alden went on his
 errand;
Crossing the brook at the ford, where it brawled over pebble
 and shallow,
Gathering still, as he went, the May-flowers blooming around
 him, 210
Fragrant, filling the air with a strange and wonderful sweet-
 ness,
Children lost in the woods, and covered with leaves in their
 slumber.
"Puritan flowers," he said, "and the type of Puritan maidens,
Modest and simple and sweet, the very type of Priscilla!

So I will take them to her; to Priscilla the May-flower of
Plymouth,
Modest and simple and sweet, as a parting gift will I take
them;
Breathing their silent farewells, as they fade and wither and
perish,
Soon to be thrown away as is the heart of the giver.”
So through the Plymouth woods John Alden went on his
errand;
Came to an open space, and saw the disk of the ocean, 220
Sailless, sombre and cold with the comfortless breath of the
east-wind;
Saw the new-built house, and people at work in a meadow;
Heard, as he drew near the door, the musical voice of Priscilla
Singing the hundredth Psalm, the grand old Puritan anthem,
Music that Luther sang to the sacred words of the Psalmist,
Full of the breath of the Lord, consoling and comforting
many.
Then, as he opened the door, he beheld the form of the maiden
Seated beside her wheel, and the carded wool like a snow-drift
Piled at her knee, her white hands feeding the ravenous spindle,
While with her foot on the treadle she guided the wheel in
its motion. 230
Open wide on her lap lay the well-worn psalm-book of
Ainsworth,
Printed in Amsterdam, the words and the music together,
Rough-hewn, angular notes, like stones in the wall of a church-
yard,
Darkened and overhung by the running vine of the verses.
Such was the book from whose pages she sang the old Puritan
anthem,
She, the Puritan girl, in the solitude of the forest,
Making the humble house and the modest apparel of homespun
Beautiful with her beauty, and rich with the wealth of her
being!
Over him rushed, like a wind that is keen and cold and
relentless,

Thoughts of what might have been, and the weight and woe
of his errand; 240
All the dreams that had faded, and all the hopes that had
vanished,
All his life henceforth a dreary and tenantless mansion,
Haunted by vain regrets, and pallid, sorrowful faces.
Still he said to himself, and almost fiercely he said it,
"Let not him that putteth his hand to the plough look backwards;
Though the ploughshare cut through the flowers of life to
its fountains,
Though it pass o'er the graves of the dead and the hearths of
the living,
It is the will of the Lord; and his mercy endureth forever!"

So he entered the house: and the hum of the wheel and the
singing
Suddenly ceased; for Priscilla, aroused by his step on the
threshold, 250
Rose as he entered, and gave him her hand, in signal of
welcome,
Saying, "I knew it was you, when I heard your step in the
passage;
For I was thinking of you, as I sat there singing and spinning."
Awkward and dumb with delight, that a thought of him had
been mingled
Thus in the sacred psalm, that came from the heart of the
maiden,
Silent before her he stood, and gave her the flowers for an
answer,
Finding no words for his thought. He remembered that day
in the winter,
After the first great snow, when he broke a path from the
village,
Reeling and plunging along through the drifts that encumbered
the doorway,
Stamping the snow from his feet as he entered the house, and
Priscilla 260

Laughed at his snowy locks, and gave him a seat by the
fireside,
Grateful and pleased to know he had thought of her in the
snow-storm.
Had he but spoken then! perhaps not in vain had he spoken;
Now it was all too late; the golden moment had vanished!
So he stood there abashed, and gave her the flowers for an
answer.

Then they sat down and talked of the birds and the beautiful
Spring-time,
Talked of their friends at home, and the Mayflower that sailed
on the morrow.
"I have been thinking all day," said gently the Puritan maiden,
"Dreaming all night, and thinking all day, of the hedge-rows
of England,—
They are in blossom now, and the country is all like a garden;
Thinking of lanes and fields, and the song of the lark and
the linnet, 270
Seeing the village street, and familiar faces of neighbors
Going about as of old, and stopping to gossip together,
And, at the end of the street, the village church, with the ivy
Climbing the old gray tower, and the quiet graves in the
churchyard.
Kind are the people I live with, and dear to me my religion;
Still my heart is so sad, that I wish myself back in Old England.
You will say it is wrong, but I cannot help it: I almost
Wish myself back in Old England, I feel so lonely and
wretched."

Thereupon answered the youth: "Indeed I do not condemn
you; 280
Stouter hearts than a woman's have quailed in this terrible
winter.
Yours is tender and trusting, and needs a stronger to lean on;

So I have come to you now, with an offer and proffer of
marriage
Made by a good man and true, Miles Standish the Captain
of Plymouth!"

Thus he delivered his message, the dexterous writer of
letters,—
Did not embellish the theme, nor array it in beautiful phrases,
But came straight to the point, and blurted it out like a
school-boy;
Even the Captain himself could hardly have said it more
bluntly.
Mute with amazement and sorrow, Priscilla the Puritan maiden
Looked into Alden's face, her eyes dilated with wonder, 290
Feeling his words like a blow, that stunned her and rendered
her speechless;
Till at length she exclaimed, interrupting the ominous silence:
"If the great Captain of Plymouth is so very eager to wed me,
Why does he not come himself, and take the trouble to woo me?
If I am not worth the wooing, I surely am not worth the
winning!"
Then John Alden began explaining and smoothing the matter,
Making it worse as he went, by saying the Captain was busy,—
Had no time for such things;—such things! the words grating
harshly
Fell on the ear of Priscilla; and swift as a flash she made
answer:
"Has he no time for such things, as you call it, before he is
married, 300
Would he be likely to find it, or make it, after the wedding?
That is the way with you men; you don't understand us, you
cannot.
When you have made up your minds, after thinking of this
one and that one,
Choosing, selecting, rejecting, comparing one with another,
Then you make known your desire, with abrupt and sudden
avowal,

And are offended and hurt, and indignant perhaps, that a
woman

Does not respond at once to a love that she never suspected,
Does not attain at a bound the height to which you have
been climbing.

This is not right nor just: for surely a woman's affection
Is not a thing to be asked for, and had for only the asking. 310

When one is truly in love, one not only says it, but shows it.
Had he but waited awhile, had he only showed that he loved
me,

Even this Captain of yours—who knows?—at last might have
won me,

Old and rough as he is; but now it never can happen."

Still John Alden went on, unheeding the words of Priscilla,
Urging the suit of his friend, explaining, persuading, expanding;
Spoke of his courage and skill, and of all his battles in Flanders,
How with the people of God he had chosen to suffer affliction;
How, in return for his zeal, they had made him Captain of
Plymouth;

He was a gentleman born, could trace his pedigree plainly 320
Back to Hugh Standish of Duxbury Hall, in Lancashire,
England,

Who was the son of Ralph, and the grandson of Thurston
de Standish;

Heir unto vast estates, of which he was basely defrauded,
Still bore the family arms, and had for his crest a cock argent,
Combed and wattled gules, and all the rest of the blazon.

He was a man of honor, of noble and generous nature;
Though he was rough, he was kindly; she knew how during
the winter

He had attended the sick, with a hand as gentle as woman's;
Somewhat hasty and hot, he could not deny it, and headstrong,
Stern as a soldier might be, but hearty, and placable always, 330
Not to be laughed at and scorned, because he was little of
stature;

For he was great of heart, magnanimous, courtly, courageous;

Any woman in Plymouth, nay, any woman in England,
Might be happy and proud to be called the wife of Miles
Standish!

But as he warmed and glowed, in his simple and eloquent
language,
Quite forgetful of self, and full of the praise of his rival,
Archly the maiden smiled, and, with eyes overrunning with
laughter,
Said, in a tremulous voice, "Why don't you speak for your-
self, John?"

IV. JOHN ALDEN

Into the open air John Alden, perplexed and bewildered,
Rushed like a man insane, and wandered alone by the sea-
side; 340
Paced up and down the sands, and bared his head to the
east-wind,
Cooling his heated brow, and the fire and fever within him.
Slowly as out of the heavens, with apocalyptical splendors,
Sank the City of God, in the vision of John the Apostle,
So, with its cloudy walls of chrysolite, jasper, and sapphire,
Sank the broad red sun, and over its turrets uplifted
Glimmered the golden reed of the angel who measured the city.

"Welcome, O wind of the East!" he exclaimed in his wild
exultation,
"Welcome, O wind of the East, from the caves of the misty
Atlantic!
Blowing o'er fields of dulse, and measureless meadows of sea-
grass, 350
Blowing o'er rocky wastes, and the grottos and gardens of
ocean!
Lay thy cold, moist hand on my burning forehead, and wrap
me
Close in thy garments of mist, to allay the fever within me!"

Like an awakened conscience, the sea was moaning and
tossing,
Beating remorseful and loud the mutable sands of the sea-shore.
Fierce in his soul was the struggle and tumult of passions
contending;
Love triumphant and crowned, and friendship wounded and
bleeding,
Passionate cries of desire, and importunate pleadings of duty!
"Is it my fault," he said, "that the maiden has chosen between
us?
Is it my fault that he failed,—my fault that I am the
victor?" 360
Then within him there thundered a voice, like the voice of
the Prophet:
"It hath displeased the Lord!"—and he thought of David's
transgression,
Bathsheba's beautiful face, and his friend in the front of the
battle!
Shame and confusion of guilt, and abasement and self-
condemnation,
Overwhelmed him at once; and he cried in the deepest
contrition:
"It hath displeased the Lord! It is the temptation of Satan!"

Then, uplifting his head, he looked at the sea, and beheld
there
Dimly the shadowy form of the Mayflower riding at anchor,
Rocked on the rising tide, and ready to sail on the morrow;
Heard the voices of men through the mist, the rattle of
cordage 370
Thrown on the deck, the shouts of the mate, and the sailors'
"Ay, ay, Sir!"
Clear and distinct, but not loud, in the dripping air of the
twilight.
Still for a moment he stood, and listened, and stared at the
vessel,
Then went hurriedly on, as one who, seeing a phantom,

Stops, then quickens his pace, and follows the beckoning shadow.

“Yes, it is plain to me now,” he murmured; “the hand of the Lord is

Leading me out of the land of darkness, the bondage of error,
Through the sea, that shall lift the walls of its waters around me,
Hiding me, cutting me off, from the cruel thoughts that pursue me.

Back will I go o’er the ocean, this dreary land will abandon,

380

Her whom I may not love, and him whom my heart has offended.

Better to be in my grave in the green old churchyard in England,

Close by my mother’s side, and among the dust of my kindred;
Better be dead and forgotten, than living in shame and dishonor!

Sacred and safe and unseen, in the dark of the narrow chamber
With me my secret shall lie, like a buried jewel that glimmers
Bright on the hand that is dust, in the chambers of silence
and darkness,—

Yes, as the marriage ring of the great espousal hereafter!”

Thus as he spake, he turned, in the strength of his strong resolution,

Leaving behind him the shore, and hurried along in the twilight,

390

Through the congenial gloom of the forest silent and sombre,
Till he beheld the lights in the seven houses of Plymouth,
Shining like seven stars in the dusk and mist of the evening.

Soon he entered his door, and found the redoubtable Captain
Sitting alone, and absorbed in the martial pages of Cæsar,
Fighting some great campaign in Hainault or Brabant or Flanders.

“Long have you been on your errand,” he said with a cheery demeanor,

Even as one who is waiting an answer, and fears not the issue.

“Not far off is the house, although the woods are between us;
But you have lingered so long, that while you were going
and coming 400
I have fought ten battles and sacked and demolished a city.
Come, sit down, and in order relate to me all that has happened.”

Then John Alden spake, and related the wondrous ad-
venture,
From beginning to end, minutely, just as it happened;
How he had seen Priscilla, and how he had sped in his court-
ship,
Only smoothing a little, and softening down her refusal.
But when he came at length to the words Priscilla had spoken,
Words so tender and cruel: “Why don’t you speak for your-
self, John?”
Up leaped the Captain of Plymouth, and stamped on the floor,
till his armor
Clanged on the wall, where it hung, with a sound of sinister
omen. 410
All his pent-up wrath burst forth in a sudden explosion,
E’en as a hand-grenade, that scatters destruction around it.
Wildly he shouted, and loud: “John Alden! you have betrayed
me!
Me, Miles Standish, your friend! have supplanted, defrauded,
betrayed me!
One of my ancestors ran his sword through the heart of
Wat Tyler;
Who shall prevent me from running my own through the
heart of a traitor?
Yours is the greater treason, for yours is a treason to friendship!
You, who lived under my roof, whom I cherished and loved
as a brother;
You, who have fed at my board, and drunk at my cup, to
whose keeping
I have intrusted my honor, my thoughts the most sacred
and secret,— 420
You too, Brutus! ah woe to the name of friendship hereafter!

Brutus was Cæsar's friend, and you were mine, but hence-
forward
Let there be nothing between us save war, and implacable
hatred!"

So spake the Captain of Plymouth, and strode about in
the chamber,
Chafing and choking with rage; like cords were the veins on
his temples.
But in the midst of his anger a man appeared at the doorway,
Bringing in uttermost haste a message of urgent importance,
Rumors of danger and war and hostile incursions of Indians!
Straightway the Captain paused, and, without further question
or parley,
Took from the nail on the wall his sword with its scabbard
of iron, 430
Buckled the belt round his waist, and, frowning fiercely,
departed.
Alden was left alone. He heard the clank of the scabbard
Growing fainter and fainter, and dying away in the distance.
Then he arose from his seat, and looked forth into the
darkness,
Felt the cool air blow on his cheek, that was hot with the insult,
Lifted his eyes to the heavens, and, folding his hands as in
childhood,
Prayed in the silence of night to the Father who seeth in secret.

Meanwhile the choleric Captain strode wrathful away to
the council,
Found it already assembled, impatiently waiting his coming;
Men in the middle of life, austere and grave in deportment, 440
Only one of them old, the hill that was nearest to heaven,
Covered with snow, but erect, the excellent Elder of Plymouth.
God had sifted three kingdoms to find the wheat for this
planting,
Then had sifted the wheat, as the living seed of a nation;
So say the chronicles old, and such is the faith of the people!

Near them was standing an Indian, in attitude stern and defiant,
Naked down to the waist, and grim and ferocious in aspect;
While on the table before them was lying unopened a Bible,
Ponderous, bound in leather, brass-studded, printed in
Holland,

And beside it outstretched the skin of a rattlesnake
glittered, 450

Filled, like a quiver, with arrows; a signal and challenge
of warfare,

Brought by the Indian, and speaking with arrowy tongues
of defiance.

This Miles Standish beheld, as he entered, and heard them
debating

What were an answer befitting the hostile message and menace,

Talking of this and of that, contriving, suggesting, objecting;

One voice only for peace, and that the voice of the Elder,

Judging it wise and well that some at least were converted,

Rather than any were slain, for this was but Christian behavior!

Then out spake Miles Standish, the stalwart Captain of
Plymouth,

Muttering deep in his throat, for his voice was husky with
anger, 460

"What! do you mean to make war with milk and the water
of roses?

Is it to shoot red squirrels you have your howitzer planted

There on the roof of the church, or is it to shoot red devils?

Truly the only tongue that is understood by a savage

Must be the tongue of fire that speaks from the mouth of
the cannon!"

Thereupon answered and said the excellent Elder of Plymouth,
Somewhat amazed and alarmed at this irreverent language:

"Not so thought Saint Paul, nor yet the other Apostles;

Not from the cannon's mouth were the tongues of fire they
spake with!"

But unheeded fell this mild rebuke on the Captain, 470

Who had advanced to the table, and thus continued discoursing:

"Leave this matter to me, for to me by right it pertaineth.

War is a terrible trade; but in the cause that is righteous,
Sweet is the smell of powder; and thus I answer the challenge!"

Then from the rattlesnake's skin, with a sudden, con-
temptuous gesture,
Jerking the Indian arrows, he filled it with powder and bullets
Full to the very jaws, and handed it back to the savage,
Saying, in thundering tones: "Here, take it! this is your
answer!"
Silently out of the room then glided the glistening savage,
Bearing the serpent's skin, and seeming himself like a
serpent, 480
Winding his sinuous way in the dark to the depths of the forest.

V. THE SAILING OF THE MAYFLOWER

Just in the gray of the dawn, as the mists uprose from the
meadows,
There was a stir and a sound in the slumbering village of
Plymouth;
Clanging and clicking of arms, and the order imperative,
"Forward!"
Given in tone suppressed, a tramp of feet, and then silence.
Figures ten, in the mist, marched slowly out of the village.
Standish the stalwart it was, with eight of his valorous army,
Led by their Indian guide, by Hobomok, friend of the white
men,
Northward marching to quell the sudden revolt of the savage.
Giants they seemed in the mist, or the mighty men of King
David; 490
Giants in heart they were, who believed in God and the Bible,—
Ay, who believed in the smiting of Midianites and Philistines.
Over them gleamed far off the crimson banners of morning;
Under them loud on the sands, the serried billows, advancing,
Fired along the line, and in regular order retreated.

Many a mile had they marched, when at length the village
of Plymouth

Woke from its sleep, and arose, intent on its manifold labors.
Sweet was the air and soft; and slowly the smoke from the
chimneys

Rose over roofs of thatch, and pointed steadily eastward;
Men came forth from the doors, and paused and talked of the
weather, 500

Said that the wind had changed, and was blowing fair for the
Mayflower;

Talked of their Captain's departure, and all the dangers that
menaced,

He being gone, the town, and what should be done in his
absence.

Merrily sang the birds, and the tender voices of women
Consecrated with hymns the common cares of the household.
Out of the sea rose the sun, and the billows rejoiced at his
coming;

Beautiful were his feet on the purple tops of the mountains;
Beautiful on the sails of the Mayflower riding at anchor,
Battered and blackened and worn by all the storms of the winter.
Loosely against her masts was hanging and flapping her
canvas, 510

Rent by so many gales, and patched by the hands of the sailors.
Suddenly from her side, as the sun rose over the ocean,
Darted a puff of smoke, and floated seaward; anon rang
Loud over field and forest the cannon's roar, and the echoes
Heard and repeated the sound, the signal-gun of departure!
Ah! but with louder echoes replied the hearts of the people!
Meekly, in voices subdued, the chapter was read from the
Bible,

Meekly the prayer was begun, but ended in fervent entreaty!
Then from their houses in haste came forth the Pilgrims
of Plymouth,

Men and women and children, all hurrying down to the
sea-shore, 520

Eager, with tearful eyes, to say farewell to the Mayflower,
Homeward bound o'er the sea, and leaving them here in the
desert.

Foremost among them was Alden. All night he had lain
without slumber,
Turning and tossing about in the heat and unrest of his fever.
He had beheld Miles Standish, who came back late from the
council,
Stalking into the room, and heard him mutter and murmur;
Sometimes it seemed a prayer, and sometimes it sounded like
swearing.
Once he had come to the bed, and stood there a moment
in silence;
Then he had turned away, and said: "I will not awake him;
Let him sleep on, it is best; for what is the use of more
talking!" 530
Then he extinguished the light, and threw himself down on
his pallet,
Dressed as he was, and ready to start at the break of the
morning,—
Covered himself with the cloak he had worn in his campaigns
in Flanders,—
Slept as a soldier sleeps in his bivouac, ready for action.
But with the dawn he arose; in the twilight Alden beheld him
Put on his corselet of steel, and all the rest of his armor,
Buckle about his waist his trusty blade of Damascus,
'Take from the corner his musket, and so stride out of the
chamber.
Often the heart of the youth had burned and yearned to
embrace him,
Often his lips had essayed to speak, imploring for pardon; 540
All the old friendship came back, with its tender and grateful
emotions;
But his pride overmastered the nobler nature within him,—
Pride, and the sense of his wrong, and the burning fire of
the insult.
So he beheld his friend departing in anger, but spake not,
Saw him go forth to danger, perhaps to death, and he spake not!
Then he arose from his bed, and heard what the people were
saying,

Joined in the talk at the door, with Stephen and Richard
and Gilbert,
Joined in the morning prayer, and in the reading of Scripture,
And, with the others, in haste went hurrying down to the
sea-shore,
Down to the Plymouth Rock, that had been to their feet as
a doorstep 550
Into a world unknown,—the corner-stone of a nation!

There with his boat was the Master, already a little impatient
Lest he should lose the tide, or the wind might shift to the
eastward,
Square-built, hearty, and strong, with an odor of ocean about
him,
Speaking with this one and that, and cramming letters and
parcels
Into his pockets capacious, and messages mingled together
Into his narrow brain, till at last he was wholly bewildered.
Nearer the boat stood Alden, with one foot placed on the
gunwale,
One still firm on the rock, and talking at times with the
sailors,
Seated erect on the thwarts, all ready and eager for starting. 560
He too was eager to go, and thus put an end to his anguish,
Thinking to fly from despair, that swifter than keel is or
canvas,
Thinking to drown in the sea the ghost that would rise and
pursue him.
But as he gazed on the crowd, he beheld the form of Priscilla
Standing dejected among them, unconscious of all that was
passing.
Fixed were her eyes upon his, as if she divined his intention,
Fixed with a look so sad, so reproachful, imploring, and
patient,
That with a sudden revulsion his heart recoiled from its
purpose,
As from the verge of a crag, where one step more is destruction.

Strange is the heart of man, with its quick, mysterious
instincts! 570

Strange is the life of man, and fatal or fated are moments,
Whereupon turn, as on hinges, the gates of the wall adamantine!

"Here I remain!" he exclaimed, as he looked at the heavens
above him,

Thanking the Lord whose breath had scattered the mist and
the madness,

Wherein, blind and lost, to death he was staggering headlong.
"Yonder snow-white cloud, that floats in the ether above me,
Seems like a hand that is pointing and beckoning over the
ocean.

There is another hand, that is not so spectral and ghost-like,
Holding me, drawing me back, and clasping mine for
protection.

Float, O hand of cloud, and vanish away in the ether! 580
Roll thyself up like a fist, to threaten and daunt me; I heed not
Either your warning or menace, or any omen of evil!

There is no land so sacred, no air so pure and so wholesome,
As is the air she breathes, and the soil that is pressed by her
footsteps.

Here for her sake will I stay, and like an invisible presence
Hover around her forever, protecting, supporting her
weakness;

Yes! as my foot was the first that stepped on this rock at the
landing,

So, with the blessing of God, shall it be the last at the leaving!"

Meanwhile the Master alert, but with dignified air and
important,

Scanning with watchful eye the tide and the wind and the
weather, 590

Walked about on the sands, and the people crowded around
him

Saying a few last words, and enforcing his careful remembrance.
Then, taking each by the hand, as if he were grasping a tiller,

Into the boat he sprang, and in haste shoved off to his vessel,
Glad in his heart to get rid of all this worry and flurry,
Glad to be gone from a land of sand and sickness and sorrow,
Short allowance of victual, and plenty of nothing but Gospel!
Lost in the sound of the oars was the last farewell of the
Pilgrims.

O strong hearts and true! not one went back in the May-
flower!

No, not one looked back, who had set his hand to this
ploughing! 600

Soon were heard on board the shouts and songs of the
sailors
Heaving the windlass round, and hoisting the ponderous
anchor.

Then the yards were braced, and all sails set to the west-wind,
Blowing steady and strong; and the Mayflower sailed from
the harbor,

Rounded the point of the Gurnet, and leaving far to the
southward

Island and cape of sand, and the Field of the First Encounter,
Took the wind on her quarter, and stood for the open Atlantic,
Borne on the send of the sea, and the swelling hearts of
the Pilgrims.

Long in silence they watched the receding sail of the vessel,
Much endeared to them all, as something living and
human; 610

Then, as if filled with the spirit, and wrapt in a vision prophetic,
Baring his hoary head, the excellent Elder of Plymouth
Said, "Let us pray!" and they prayed, and thanked the Lord
and took courage.

Mournfully sobbed the waves at the base of the rock, and
above them

Bowed and whispered the wheat on the hill of death, and
their kindred

Seemed to awake in their graves, and to join in the prayer that
they uttered.

Sun-illuminated and white, on the eastern verge of the ocean
Gleamed the departing sail, like a marble slab in a graveyard;
Buried beneath it lay forever all hope of escaping. 619
Lo! as they turned to depart, they saw the form of an Indian,
Watching them from the hill; but while they spake with
each other,
Pointing with outstretched hands, and saying, "Look!" he
had vanished.
So they returned to their homes; but Alden lingered a little,
Musing alone on the shore, and watching the wash of the
billows
Round the base of the rock, and the sparkle and flash of the
sunshine,
Like the spirit of God, moving visibly over the waters.

VI. PRISCILLA

Thus for a while he stood, and mused by the shore of the
ocean,
Thinking of many things, and most of all of Priscilla;
And as if thought had the power to draw to itself, like the
loadstone,
Whatsoever it touches, by subtile laws of its nature, 630
Lo! as he turned to depart, Priscilla was standing beside him.

"Are you so much offended, you will not speak to me?"
said she.
"Am I so much to blame, that yesterday, when you were
pleading
Warmly the cause of another, my heart, impulsive and
wayward,
Pleaded your own, and spake out, forgetful perhaps of
decorum?
Certainly you can forgive me for speaking so frankly, for
saying
What I ought not to have said, yet now I can never unsay it;
For there are moments in life, when the heart is so full of
emotion,

That if by chance it be shaken, or into its depths like a pebble
Drops some careless word, it overflows, and its secret, 640
Spilt on the ground like water, can never be gathered together.
Yesterday I was shocked, when I heard you speak of Miles

Standish,

Praising his virtues, transforming his very defects into virtues,
Praising his courage and strength, and even his fighting in
Flanders,

As if by fighting alone you could win the heart of a woman,
Quite overlooking yourself and the rest, in exalting your hero.
Therefore I spake as I did, by an irresistible impulse.

You will forgive me, I hope, for the sake of the friendship
between us,

Which is too true and too sacred to be so easily broken!"

Thereupon answered John Alden, the scholar, the friend of
Miles Standish: 650

"I was not angry with you; with myself alone I was angry,
Seeing how badly I managed the matter I had in my keeping."

"No!" interrupted the maiden, with answer prompt and
decisive;

"No; you were angry with me, for speaking so frankly and freely.

It was wrong, I acknowledge; for it is the fate of a woman
Long to be patient and silent, to wait like a ghost that is
speechless,

Till some questioning voice dissolves the spell of its silence.

Hence is the inner life of so many suffering women

Sunless and silent and deep, like subterranean rivers

Running through caverns of darkness, unheard, unseen, and
unfruitful, 660

Chafing their channels of stone, with endless and profitless
murmurs."

Thereupon answered John Alden, the young man, the lover
of women:

"Heaven forbid it, Priscilla; and truly they seem to me always
More like the beautiful rivers that watered the garden of Eden,
More like the river Euphrates, through deserts of Havilah
flowing,

Filling the land with delight, and memories sweet of the garden!"

"Ah, by these words, I can see," again interrupted the maiden, "How very little you prize me, or care for what I am saying. When from the depths of my heart, in pain and with secret misgiving,

Frankly I speak to you, asking for sympathy only and kindness, 670

Straightway you take up my words, that are plain and direct and in earnest,

Turn them away from their meaning, and answer with flattering phrases.

This is not right, is not just, is not true to the best that is in you; For I know and esteem you, and feel that your nature is noble, Lifting mine up to a higher, a more ethereal level.

Therefore I value your friendship, and feel it perhaps the more keenly

If you say aught that implies I am only as one among many, If you make use of those common and complimentary phrases Most men think so fine, in dealing and speaking with women, But which women reject as insipid, if not as insulting." 680

Mute and amazed was Alden; and listened and looked at Priscilla,

Thinking he never had seen her more fair, more divine in her beauty.

He who but yesterday pleaded so glibly the cause of another, Stood there embarrassed and silent, and seeking in vain for an answer.

So the maiden went on, and little divined or imagined What was at work in his heart, that made him so awkward and speechless.

"Let us, then, be what we are, and speak what we think, and in all things

Keep ourselves loyal to truth, and the sacred professions of friendship.

It is no secret I tell you, nor am I ashamed to declare it:

I have liked to be with you, to see you, to speak with you
always. 690

So I was hurt at your words, and a little affronted to hear you
Urge me to marry your friend, though he were the Captain
Miles Standish.

For I must tell you the truth: much more to me is your
friendship

Than all the love he could give, were he twice the hero you
think him."

Then she extended her hand, and Alden, who eagerly
grasped it,

Felt all the wounds in his heart, that were aching and bleed-
ing so sorely,

Healed by the touch of that hand, and he said, with a voice
full of feeling:

"Yes, we must ever be friends; and of all who offer you
friendship

Let me be ever the first, the truest, the nearest and dearest!"

Casting a farewell look at the glimmering sail of the
Mayflower, 700

Distant, but still in sight, and sinking below the horizon,
Homeward together they walked, with a strange, indefinite
feeling,

That all the rest had departed and left them alone in the desert.

But, as they went through the fields in the blessing and smile
of the sunshine,

Lighter grew their hearts, and Priscilla said very archly:

"Now that our terrible Captain has gone in pursuit of the Indians,
Where he is happier far than he would be commanding a
household,

You may speak boldly, and tell me of all that happened
between you,

When you returned last night, and said how ungrateful you
found me."

Thereupon answered John Alden, and told her the whole of
the story,— 710

Told her his own despair, and the direful wrath of Miles
Standish.
Whereat the maiden smiled, and said between laughing
and earnest,
“He is a little chimney, and heated hot in a moment!”
But as he gently rebuked her, and told her how he had
suffered,—
How he had even determined to sail that day in the May-
flower,
And had remained for her sake, on hearing the dangers that
threatened,—
All her manner was changed, and she said with a faltering
accent,
“Truly I thank you for this: how good you have been to
me always!”

Thus, as a pilgrim devout, who toward Jerusalem journeys,
Taking three steps in advance, and one reluctantly back-
ward, 720
Urged by importunate zeal, and withheld by pangs of contri-
tion;
Slowly but steadily onward, receding yet ever advancing,
Journeyed this Puritan youth to the Holy Land of his
longings,
Urged by the fervor of love, and withheld by remorseful
misgivings.

VII. THE MARCH OF MILES STANDISH

Meanwhile the stalwart Miles Standish was marching steadily
northward,
Winding through forest and swamp, and along the trend of
the sea-shore,
All day long, with hardly a halt, the fire of his anger
Burning and crackling within, and the sulphurous odor of
powder
Seeming more sweet to his nostrils than all the scents of the
forest.

Silent and moody he went, and much he revolved his discomfort;
730

He who was used to success, and to easy victories always,
Thus to be flouted, rejected, and laughed to scorn by a maiden,
Thus to be mocked and betrayed by the friend whom most
he had trusted!

Ah! 't was too much to be borne, and he fretted and chafed
in his armor!

"I alone am to blame," he muttered, "for mine was the folly.
What has a rough old soldier, grown grim and gray in the
harness,

Used to the camp and its ways, to do with the wooing of
maidens?

'T was but a dream,—let it pass,—let it vanish like so many
others!

What I thought was a flower, is only a weed, and is worthless;
Out of my heart will I pluck it, and throw it away, and
henceforward
740

Be but a fighter of battles, a lover and wooer of dangers!"
Thus he revolved in his mind his sorry defeat and discomfort,
While he was marching by day or lying at night in the forest,
Looking up at the trees, and the constellations beyond them.

After a three days' march he came to an Indian encampment
Pitched on the edge of a meadow, between the sea and the
forest;

Women at work by the tents, and warriors, horrid with war-
paint,

Seated about a fire, and smoking and talking together;

Who, when they saw from afar the sudden approach of the
white men,

Saw the flash of the sun on breastplate and sabre and
musket,
750

Straightway leaped to their feet, and two, from among them
advancing,

Came to parley with Standish, and offer him furs as a present;

Friendship was in their looks, but in their hearts there was hatred.

Braves of the tribe were these, and brothers gigantic in stature,

Huge as Goliath of Gath, or the terrible Og, king of Bashan;
One was Pecksuot named, and the other was called Wattawamat.

Round their necks were suspended their knives in scabbards of wampum,

Two-edged, trenchant knives, with points as sharp as a needle.
Other arms had they none, for they were cunning and crafty.
"Welcome, English!" they said,—these words they had learned
from the traders

760

Touching at times on the coast, to barter and chaffer for peltries.

Then in their native tongue they began to parley with Standish,

Through his guide and interpreter, Hobomok, friend of the white man,

Begging for blankets and knives, but mostly for muskets and powder,

Kept by the white man, they said, concealed, with the plague, in his cellars,

Ready to be let loose, and destroy his brother the red man!

But when Standish refused, and said he would give them the Bible,

Suddenly changing their tone, they began to boast and to bluster.

Then Wattawamat advanced with a stride in front of the other,
And, with a lofty demeanor, thus vauntingly spake to the Captain:

770

"Now Wattawamat can see, by the fiery eyes of the Captain,
Angry is he in his heart; but the heart of the brave Wattawamat

Is not afraid at the sight. He was not born of a woman,
But on a mountain at night, from an oak-tree riven by lightning,

Forth he sprang at a bound, with all his weapons about him,
Shouting, 'Who is there here to fight with the brave Watta-
wamat?' "

Then he unsheathed his knife, and, whetting the blade on his
left hand,

Held it aloft and displayed a woman's face on the handle,
Saying, with bitter expression and look of sinister meaning:

"I have another at home, with the face of a man on the
handle; 780

By and by they shall marry; and there will be plenty of
children!"

Then stood Pecksuot forth, self-vaunting, insulting Miles
Standish:

While with his fingers he patted the knife that hung at his
bosom,

Drawing it half from its sheath, and plunging it back, as he
muttered,

"By and by it shall see; it shall eat; ah, ha! but shall speak not!
This is the mighty Captain the white men have sent to destroy
us!

He is a little man; let him go and work with the women!"

Meanwhile Standish had noted the faces and figures of
Indians

Peeping and creeping about from bush to tree in the forest,
Feigning to look for game, with arrows set on their bow-
strings, 790

Drawing about him still closer and closer the net of their
ambush.

But undaunted he stood, and dissembled and treated them
smoothly;

So the old chronicles say, that were writ in the days of the
fathers.

But when he heard their defiance, the boast, the taunt, and the
insult,

All the hot blood of his race, of Sir Hugh and of Thurston
de Standish,

Boiled and beat in his heart, and swelled in the veins of his temples.

Headlong he leaped on the boaster, and, snatching his knife from its scabbard,

Plunged it into his heart, and, reeling backward, the savage
Fell with his face to the sky, and a fiendlike fierceness upon it.
Straight there arose from the forest the awful sound of the
war-whoop, 800

And, like a flurry of snow on the whistling wind of December,
Swift and sudden and keen came a flight of feathery arrows.

Then came a cloud of smoke, and out of the cloud came the lightning,

Out of the lightning thunder; and death unseen ran before it.
Frightened the savages fled for shelter in swamp and in thicket,
Hotly pursued and beset; but their sachem, the brave
Wattawamat,

Fled not; he was dead. Unswerving and swift had a bullet
Passed through his brain, and he fell with both hands clutch-
ing the greensward,

Seeming in death to hold back from his foe the land of his fathers.

There on the flowers of the meadow the warriors lay, and
above them, 810

Silent, with folded arms, stood Hobomok, friend of the white
man.

Smiling at length he exclaimed to the stalwart Captain of
Plymouth:

“Pecksuot bragged very loud, of his courage, his strength,
and his stature,—

Mocked the great Captain, and called him a little man; but
I see now

Big enough have you been to lay him speechless before you!”

Thus the first battle was fought and won by the stalwart
Miles Standish.

When the tidings thereof were brought to the village of
Plymouth,

And as a trophy of war the head of the brave Wattawamat
Scowled from the roof of the fort, which at once was a church
and a fortress,

All who beheld it rejoiced, and praised the Lord, and took
courage. 820

Only Priscilla averted her face from this spectre of terror,
Thanking God in her heart that she had not married Miles
Standish;

Shrinking, fearing almost, lest, coming home from his battles,
He should lay claim to her hand, as the prize and reward of
his valor.

VIII. THE SPINNING-WHEEL

Month after month passed away, and in Autumn the ships
of the merchants

Came with kindred and friends, with cattle and corn for the
Pilgrims.

All in the village was peace; the men were intent on their
labors,

Busy with hewing and building, with garden-plot and with
merestead,

Busy with breaking the glebe, and mowing the grass in the
meadows,

Searching the sea for its fish, and hunting the deer in the
forest. 830

All in the village was peace; but at times the rumor of warfare
Filled the air with alarm, and the apprehension of danger.

Bravely the stalwart Standish was scouring the land with his
forces,

Waxing valiant in fight and defeating the alien armies,
Till his name had become a sound of fear to the nations.

Anger was still in his heart, but at times the remorse and
contrition

Which in all noble natures succeed the passionate outbreak,
Came like a rising tide, that encounters the rush of a river,
Staying its current awhile, but making it bitter and brackish.

Meanwhile Alden at home had built him a new habi-
tation, 840
Solid, substantial, of timber rough-hewn from the firs of the
forest.
Wooden-barred was the door, and the roof was covered with
rushes;
Latticed the windows were, and the window-panes were of
paper,
Oiled to admit the light, while wind and rain were excluded.
There too he dug a well, and around it planted an orchard:
Still may be seen to this day some trace of the well and the
orchard.
Close to the house was the stall, where, safe and secure from
annoyance,
Raghorn, the snow-white bull, that had fallen to Alden's
allotment
In the division of cattle, might ruminate in the night-time
Over the pastures he cropped, made fragrant by sweet
pennyroyal. 850

Oft when his labor was finished, with eager feet would
the dreamer
Follow the pathway that ran through the woods to the house
of Priscilla,
Led by illusions romantic and subtle deceptions of fancy,
Pleasure disguised as duty, and love in the semblance of
friendship.
Ever of her he thought, when he fashioned the walls of his
dwelling;
Ever of her he thought, when he delved in the soil of his
garden;
Ever of her he thought, when he read in his Bible on Sunday
Praise of the virtuous woman, as she is described in the
Proverbs,—
How the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her always,
How all the days of her life she will do him good, and not
evil, 860

How she seeketh the wool and the flax and worketh with
gladness,
How she layeth her hand to the spindle and holdeth the distaff,
How she is not afraid of the snow for herself or her household,
Knowing her household are clothed with the scarlet cloth of
her weaving!

So as she sat at her wheel one afternoon in the Autumn,
Alden, who opposite sat, and was watching her dexterous
fingers,
As if the thread she was spinning were that of his life and
his fortune,
After a pause in their talk, thus spake to the sound of the
spindle.
"Truly, Priscilla," he said, "when I see you spinning and
spinning,
Never idle a moment, but thrifty and thoughtful of others, 870
Suddenly you are transformed, are visibly changed in a
moment;
You are no longer Priscilla, but Bertha the Beautiful Spinner."
Here the light foot on the treadle grew swifter and swifter;
the spindle
Uttered an angry snarl, and the thread snapped short in her
fingers;
While the impetuous speaker, not heeding the mischief,
continued:
"You are the beautiful Bertha, the spinner, the queen of
Helvetia;
She whose story I read at a stall in the streets of Southampton,
Who, as she rode on her palfrey, o'er valley and meadow and
mountain,
Ever was spinning her thread from a distaff fixed to her
saddle.
She was so thrifty and good, that her name passed into a
proverb. 880
So shall it be with your own, when the spinning-wheel shall
no longer

Hum in the house of the farmer, and fill its chambers with music.

Then shall the mothers, reproving, relate how it was in their childhood,

Praising the good old times, and the days of Priscilla the spinner!"

Straight uprose from her wheel the beautiful Puritan maiden,
Pleased with the praise of her thrift from him whose praise was the sweetest,

Drew from the reel on the table a snowy skein of her spinning,

Thus making answer, meanwhile, to the flattering phrases of Alden:

"Come, you must not be idle; if I am a pattern for housewives,
Show yourself equally worthy of being the model of husbands. 890

Hold this skein on your hands, while I wind it, ready for knitting;

Then who knows but hereafter, when fashions have changed and the manners,

Fathers may talk to their sons of the good old times of John Alden!"

Thus, with a jest and a laugh, the skein on his hands she adjusted,

He sitting awkwardly there, with his arms extended before him,

She standing graceful, erect, and winding the thread from his fingers,

Sometimes chiding a little his clumsy manner of holding,

Sometimes touching his hands, as she disentangled expertly

Twist or knot in the yarn, unawares—for how could she help it?—

Sending electrical thrills through every nerve in his body. 900

Lo! in the midst of this scene, a breathless messenger entered,

Bringing in hurry and heat the terrible news from the village.

Yes; Miles Standish was dead!—an Indian had brought them
the tidings,—

Slain by a poisoned arrow, shot down in the front of the battle,
Into an ambush beguiled, cut off with the whole of his forces;
All the town would be burned, and all the people be murdered!
Such were the tidings of evil that burst on the hearts of the
hearers.

Silent and statue-like stood Priscilla, her face looking back-
ward

Still at the face of the speaker, her arms uplifted in horror;
But John Alden, upstarting, as if the barb of the arrow 910
Piercing the heart of his friend had struck his own, and had
sundered

Once and forever the bonds that held him bound as a captive,
Wild with excess of sensation, the awful delight of his freedom,
Mingled with pain and regret, unconscious of what he was
doing,

Clasped, almost with a groan, the motionless form of Priscilla,
Pressing her close to his heart, as forever his own, and
exclaiming:

“Those whom the Lord hath united, let no man put them
asunder!”

Even as rivulets twain, from distant and separate sources,
Seeing each other afar, as they leap from the rocks, and
pursuing

Each one its devious path, but drawing nearer and nearer, 920
Rush together at last, at their trysting-place in the forest;
So these lives that had run thus far in separate channels,
Coming in sight of each other, then swerving and flowing
asunder,

Parted by barriers strong, but drawing nearer and nearer,
Rushed together at last, and one was lost in the other.

IX. THE WEDDING-DAY

Forth from the curtain of clouds, from the tent of purple
and scarlet,

Issued the sun, the great High-Priest, in his garments resplendent,
Holiness unto the Lord, in letters of light, on his forehead,
Round the hem of his robe the golden bells and pomegranates.
Blessing the world he came, and the bars of vapor beneath
him 930
Gleamed like a grate of brass, and the sea at his feet was a laver!

This was the wedding morn of Priscilla the Puritan maiden.
Friends were assembled together; the Elder and Magistrate also
Graced the scene with their presence, and stood like the Law
and the Gospel,
One with the sanction of earth and one with the blessing of
heaven.
Simple and brief was the wedding, as that of Ruth and of Boaz.
Softly the youth and the maiden repeated the words of
betrothal,
Taking each other for husband and wife in the Magistrate's
presence,
After the Puritan way, and the laudable custom of Holland.
Fervently then, and devoutly, the excellent Elder of Plym-
outh 940
Prayed for the hearth and the home, that were founded that
day in affection,
Speaking of life and of death, and imploring Divine benedic-
tions.

Lo! when the service was ended, a form appeared on the
threshold,
Clad in armor of steel, a sombre and sorrowful figure!
Why does the bridegroom start and stare at the strange
apparition?
Why does the bride turn pale, and hide her face on his
shoulder?
Is it a phantom of air,—a bodiless, spectral illusion?
Is it a ghost from the grave, that has come to forbid the
betrothal?
Long had it stood there unseen, a guest uninvited, unwelcomed;

Over its clouded eyes there had passed at times an ex-
pression 950

Softening the gloom and revealing the warm heart hidden
beneath them,

As when across the sky the driving rack of the rain-cloud
Grows for a moment thin, and betrays the sun by its brightness.
Once it had lifted its hand, and moved its lips, but was silent,
As if an iron will had mastered the fleeting intention.

But when were ended the troth and the prayer and the last
benediction,

Into the room it strode, and the people beheld with amaze-
ment

Bodily there in his armor Miles Standish, the Captain of
Plymouth!

Grasping the bridegroom's hand, he said with emotion,
"Forgive me!

I have been angry and hurt,—too long have I cherished the
feeling; 960

I have been cruel and hard, but now, thank God! it is ended.
Mine is the same hot blood that leaped in the veins of Hugh
Standish,

Sensitive, swift to resent, but as swift in atoning for error.

Never so much as now was Miles Standish the friend of
John Alden."

Thereupon answered the bridegroom: "Let all be forgotten
between us,—

All save the dear old friendship, and that shall grow older
and dearer!"

Then the Captain advanced, and, bowing, saluted Priscilla,
Gravely, and after the manner of old-fashioned gentry in
England,

Something of camp and of court, of town and of country,
commingled,

Wishing her joy of her wedding, and loudly lauding her
husband. 970

Then he said with a smile: "I should have remembered the
adage,—

If you would be well served, you must serve yourself; and
moreover,
No man can gather cherries in Kent at the season of Christmas!"

Great was the people's amazement, and greater yet their
rejoicing,
Thus to behold once more the sunburnt face of their Captain,
Whom they had mourned as dead; and they gathered and
crowded about him,
Eager to see him and hear him, forgetful of bride and of
bridegroom,
Questioning, answering, laughing, and each interrupting the
other,
Till the good Captain declared, being quite overpowered and
bewildered,
He had rather by far break into an Indian encampment, 980
Than come again to a wedding to which he had not been
invited.

Meanwhile the bridegroom went forth and stood with the
bride at the doorway,
Breathing the perfumed air of that warm and beautiful morning.
Touched with autumnal tints, but lonely and sad in the
sunshine,
Lay extended before them the land of toil and privation;
There were the graves of the dead, and the barren waste of
the sea-shore,
There the familiar fields, the groves of pine, and the meadows;
But to their eyes transfigured, it seemed as the Garden of Eden,
Filled with the presence of God, whose voice was the sound
of the ocean.

Soon was their vision disturbed by the noise and stir of
departure, 990
Friends coming forth from the house, and impatient of
longer delaying,
Each with his plan for the day, and the work that was left
uncompleted.

Then from a stall near at hand, amid exclamations of wonder,
Alden the thoughtful, the careful, so happy, so proud of
Priscilla,
Brought out his snow-white bull, obeying the hand of its
master,
Led by a cord that was tied to an iron ring in its nostrils,
Covered with crimson cloth, and a cushion placed for a saddle.
She should not walk, he said, through the dust and heat of
the noonday;
Nay, she should ride like a queen, not plod along like a peasant.
Somewhat alarmed at first, but reassured by the others, 1000
Placing her hand on the cushion, her foot in the hand of
her husband,
Gayly, with joyous laugh, Priscilla mounted her palfrey.
"Nothing is wanting now," he said with a smile, "but the distaff;
Then you would be in truth my queen, my beautiful Bertha!"

Onward the bridal procession now moved to their new
habitation,
Happy husband and wife, and friends conversing together.
Pleasantly murmured the brook, as they crossed the ford in
the forest,
Pleased with the image that passed, like a dream of love,
through its bosom,
Tremulous, floating in air, o'er the depths of the azure abysses.
Down through the golden leaves the sun was pouring his
splendors, 1010
Gleaming on purple grapes, that, from branches above them
suspended,
Mingled their odorous breath with the balm of the pine and
the fir-tree,
Wild and sweet as the clusters that grew in the valley of
Eshcol.
Like a picture it seemed of the primitive, pastoral ages,
Fresh with the youth of the world, and recalling Rebecca and
Isaac,
Old and yet ever new, and simple and beautiful always,

Love immortal and young in the endless succession of lovers.
So through the Plymouth woods passed onward the bridal
 procession.

1858

THE WARDEN OF THE CINQUE PORTS

A mist was driving down the British Channel,
 The day was just begun,
And through the window-panes, on floor and panel,
 Streamed the red autumn sun.

It glanced on flowing flag and rippling pennon,
 And the white sails of ships;
And, from the frowning rampart, the black cannon
 Hailed it with feverish lips.

Sandwich and Romney, Hastings, Hithe, and Dover
 Were all alert that day, 10
To see the French war-steamers speeding over,
 When the fog cleared away.

Sullen and silent, and like couchant lions,
 Their cannon, through the night,
Holding their breath, had watched, in grim defiance,
 The sea-coast opposite.

And now they roared at drum-beat from their stations
 On every citadel;
Each answering each, with morning salutations,
 That all was well. 20

And down the coast, all taking up the burden,
 Replied the distant forts,
As if to summon from his sleep the Warden
 And Lord of the Cinque Ports.

Him shall no sunshine from the fields of azure,
No drum-beat from the wall,
No morning gun from the black fort's embrasure,
Awaken with its call!

No more, surveying with an eye impartial
The long line of the coast, 30
Shall the gaunt figure of the old Field Marshal
Be seen upon his post!

For in the night, unseen, a single warrior,
In sombre harness mailed,
Dreaded of man, and surnamed the Destroyer,
The rampart wall had scaled.

He passed into the chamber of the sleeper,
The dark and silent room,
And as he entered, darker grew, and deeper,
The silence and the gloom. 40

He did not pause to parley or dissemble
But smote the Warden hoar;
Ah! what a blow! that made all England tremble
And groan from shore to shore.

Meanwhile, without, the surly cannon waited,
The sun rose bright o'erhead;
Nothing in Nature's aspect intimated
That a great man was dead.

1852

MY LOST YOUTH

Often I think of the beautiful town
That is seated by the sea;
Often in thought go up and down
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,
And my youth comes back to me.

And a verse of a Lapland song
Is haunting my memory still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees, 10
And catch, in sudden gleams,
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,
And islands that were the Hesperides
Of all my boyish dreams.
And the burden of that old song,
It murmurs and whispers still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the black wharves and the slips,
And the sea-tides tossing free; 20
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea.
And the voice of that wayward song
Is singing and saying still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,
And the fort upon the hill;
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar, 30
The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,
And the bugle wild and shrill.
And the music of that old song
Throbs in my memory still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the sea-fight far away,
How it thundered o'er the tide!

And the dead captains, as they lay
In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay 40
Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods;
And the friendships old and the early loves
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighborhoods. 50
And the verse of that sweet old song,
It flutters and murmurs still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the school-boy's brain;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
Are longings wild and vain.
And the voice of that fitful song 60
Sings on, and is never still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

There are things of which I may not speak;
There are dreams that cannot die;
There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek,
And a mist before the eye.
And the words of that fatal song
Come over me like a chill: 70
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,
As they balance up and down,
Are singing the beautiful song,
Are sighing and whispering still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will," 80
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were,
I find my lost youth again.
And the strange and beautiful song,
The groves are repeating it still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,"
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts." 90
1858

THE JEWISH CEMETERY AT NEWPORT

How strange it seems! These Hebrews in their graves,
Close by the street of this fair seaport town,
Silent beside the never-silent waves,
At rest in all this moving up and down!

The trees are white with dust, that o'er their sleep
Wave their broad curtains in the south-wind's breath,
While underneath these leafy tents they keep
The long, mysterious Exodus of Death.

And these sepulchral stones, so old and brown,
That pave with level flags their burial-place, 10
Seem like the tablets of the Law, thrown down
And broken by Moses at the mountain's base.

The very names recorded here are strange,
Of foreign accent, and of different climes;
Alvares and Rivera interchange
With Abraham and Jacob of old times.

"Blessed be God, for he created Death!"
The mourners said, "and Death is rest and peace;"
Then added, in the certainty of faith,
"And giveth Life that nevermore shall cease." 20

Closed are the portals of their Synagogue,
No Psalms of David now the silence break,
No Rabbi reads the ancient Decalogue
In the grand dialect the Prophets spake.

Gone are the living, but the dead remain,
And not neglected; for a hand unseen,
Scattering its bounty, like a summer rain,
Still keeps their graves and their remembrance green.

How came they here? What burst of Christian hate,
What persecution, merciless and blind, 30
Drove o'er the sea—that desert desolate—
These Ishmaels and Hagars of mankind?

They lived in narrow streets and lanes obscure,
Ghetto and Judenstrass, in mirk and mire;
Taught in the school of patience to endure
The life of anguish and the death of fire.

All their lives long, with the unleavened bread
And bitter herbs of exile and its fears,
The wasting famine of the heart they fed,
And slaked its thirst with marah of their tears. 40

Anathema maranatha! was the cry
That rang from town to town, from street to street;

At every gate the accursed Mordecai
Was mocked and jeered, and spurned by Christian feet.

Pride and humiliation hand in hand
Walked with them through the world where'er they went;
Trampled and beaten were they as the sand,
And yet unshaken as the continent.

For in the background figures vague and vast
Of patriarchs and of prophets rose sublime, 50
And all the great traditions of the Past
They saw reflected in the coming time.

And thus forever with reverted look
The mystic volume of the world they read,
Spelling it backward, like a Hebrew book,
Till life became a Legend of the Dead.

But ah! what once has been shall be no more!
The groaning earth in travail and in pain
Brings forth its races, but does not restore,
And the dead nations never rise again. 60

1852

CATAWBA WINE

This song of mine
Is a Song of the Vine,
To be sung by the glowing embers
Of wayside inns,
When the rain begins
To darken the drear Novembers.

It is not a song
Of the Scuppernong,
From warm Carolinian valleys,
Nor the Isabel
And the Muscadell
That bask in our garden alleys.

10

Nor the red Mustang,
Whose clusters hang
O'er the waves of the Colorado,
And the fiery flood
Of whose purple blood
Has a dash of Spanish bravado.

For richest and best
Is the wine of the West, 20
That grows by the Beautiful River;
Whose sweet perfume
Fills all the room
With a benison on the giver.

And as hollow trees
Are the haunts of bees,
Forever going and coming;
So this crystal hive
Is all alive
With a swarming and buzzing and humming. 30

Very good in its way
Is the Verzenay,
Or the Sillery soft and creamy;
But Catawba wine
Has a taste more divine,
More dulcet, delicious, and dreamy.

There grows no vine
By the haunted Rhine,
By Danube or Guadalquivir,
Nor on island or cape, 40
That bears such a grape
As grows by the Beautiful River.

Drugged is their juice
For foreign use,
When shipped o'er the reeling Atlantic,

To rack our brains
With the fever pains,
That have driven the Old World frantic.

To the sewers and sinks
With all such drinks, 50
And after them tumble the mixer;
For a poison malign
Is such Borgia wine,
Or at best but a Devil's Elixir.

While pure as a spring
Is the wine I sing,
And to praise it, one needs but name it;
For Catawba wine
Has need of no sign,
No tavern-bush to proclaim it. 60

And this Song of the Vine,
This greeting of mine,
The winds and the birds shall deliver
To the Queen of the West,
In her garlands dressed,
On the banks of the Beautiful River.

1854

SANDALPHON

Have you read in the Talmud of old,
In the Legends the Rabbins have told
Of the limitless realms of the air,
Have you read it,—the marvellous story
Of Sandalphon, the Angel of Glory,
Sandalphon, the Angel of Prayer?

How, erect, at the outermost gates
Of the City Celestial he waits,
With his feet on the ladder of light,

That, crowded with angels unnumbered, 10
By Jacob was seen, as he slumbered
Alone in the desert at night?

The Angels of Wind and of Fire
Chant only one hymn, and expire
With the song's irresistible stress;
Expire in their rapture and wonder,
As harp-strings are broken asunder
By music they throb to express.

But serene in the rapturous throng,
Unmoved by the rush of the song, 20
With eyes unimpassioned and slow,
Among the dead angels, the deathless
Sandalphon stands listening breathless
To sounds that ascend from below;—

From the spirits on earth that adore,
From the souls that entreat and implore
In the fervor and passion of prayer;
From the hearts that are broken with losses,
And weary with dragging the crosses
Too heavy for mortals to bear. 30

And he gathers the prayers as he stands,
And they change into flowers in his hands,
Into garlands of purple and red;
And beneath the great arch of the portal,
Through the streets of the City Immortal
Is wafted the fragrance they shed.

It is but a legend, I know,—
A fable, a phantom, a show,
Of the ancient Rabbinical lore;
Yet the old mediæval tradition, 40
The beautiful, strange superstition,
But haunts me and holds me the more.

When I look from my window at night,
And the welkin above is all white,
All throbbing and panting with stars,
Among them majestic is standing
Sandalphon the angel, expanding
His pinions in nebulous bars.

And the legend, I feel, is a part
Of the hunger and thirst of the heart, 50
The frenzy and fire of the brain,
That grasps at the fruitage forbidden,
The golden pomegranates of Eden,
To quiet its fever and pain.

1857

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

Between the dark and the daylight,
When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations,
That is known as the Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me
The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,
Descending the broad hall stair, 10
Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra,
And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence:
Yet I know by their merry eyes
They are plotting and planning together
To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway,
A sudden raid from the hall!
By three doors left unguarded
They enter my castle wall!

20

They climb up into my turret
O'er the arms and back of my chair;
If I try to escape, they surround me;
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,
Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine!

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,
Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old mustache as I am
Is not a match for you all!

30

I have you fast in my fortress,
And will not let you depart,
But put you down into the dungeon
In the round-tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you forever,
Yes, forever and a day,
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,
And moulder in dust away!

40

1860

A DAY OF SUNSHINE

O gift of God! O perfect day:
Whereon shall no man work, but play;
Whereon it is enough for me,
Not to be doing, but to be!

Through every fibre of my brain,
Through every nerve, through every vein,
I feel the electric thrill, the touch
Of life, that seems almost too much.

I hear the wind among the trees
Playing celestial symphonies;
I see the branches downward bent,
Like keys of some great instrument.

10

And over me unrolls on high
The splendid scenery of the sky,
Where through a sapphire sea the sun
Sails like a golden galleon,

Towards yonder cloud-land in the West,
Towards yonder Islands of the Blest,
Whose steep sierra far uplifts
Its craggy summits white with drifts.

20

Blow, winds! and waft through all the rooms
The snow-flakes of the cherry-blooms!
Blow, winds! and bend within my reach
The fiery blossoms of the peach!

O Life and Love! O happy throng
Of thoughts, whose only speech is song!
O heart of man! canst thou not be
Blithe as the air is, and as free?

1860

PAUL REVERE'S RIDE

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, "If the British march
By land or sea from the town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,—
One, if by land, and two, if by sea; 10
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country folk to be up and to arm."

Then he said, "Good night!" and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay
The Somerset, British man-of-war;
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar 20
Across the moon like a prison bar,
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street,
Wanders and watches with eager ears,
Till in the silence around him he hears
The muster of men at the barrack door,
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,
Marching down to their boats on the shore. 30

Then he climbed the tower of the Old North Church,
By the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,
To the belfry-chamber overhead,
And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the sombre rafters, that round him made
Masses and moving shapes of shade,—
By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,
To the highest window in the wall,
Where he paused to listen and look down

A moment on the roofs of the town,
And the moonlight flowing over all. 40

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,
In their night-encampment on the hill,
Wrapped in silence so deep and still
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,
The watchful night-wind, as it went
Creeping along from tent to tent,
And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"
A moment only he feels the spell
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread 50
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
On a shadowy something far away,
Where the river widens to meet the bay,—
A line of black that bends and floats
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse's side, 60
Now gazed at the landscape far and near,
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;
But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,
As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns, 70
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,

And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet:
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat. 80

He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;
And under the alders, that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
He heard the crowing of the cock,
And the barking of the farmer's dog, 90
And felt the damp of the river fog,
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,
When he galloped into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon. 100

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadows brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed

Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

110

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled,—
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farm-yard wall,
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm,—
A cry of defiance and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forevermore!
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

120

130
1860

THE SAGA OF KING OLAF

INTERLUDE

And then the blue-eyed Norseman told
A Saga of the days of old.
"There is," said he, "a wondrous book
Of Legends in the old Norse tongue,
Of the dead kings of Norroway,—
Legends that once were told or sung

In many a smoky fireside nook
Of Iceland, in the ancient day,
By wandering Saga-man or Scald;
'Heimskringla' is the volume called; 10
And he who looks may find therein
The story that I now begin."

And in each pause the story made
Upon his violin he played,
As an appropriate interlude,
Fragments of old Norwegian tunes
That bound in one the separate runes,
And held the mind in perfect mood,
Entwining and encircling all
The strange and antiquated rhymes 20
With melodies of olden times;
As over some half-ruined wall,
Disjointed and about to fall,
Fresh woodbines climb and interlace,
And keep the loosened stones in place.

I. THE CHALLENGE OF THOR

I am the God Thor,
I am the War God,
I am the Thunderer!
Here in my Northland,
My fastness and fortress,
Reign I forever!

Here amid icebergs
Rule I the nations;
This is my hammer,
Miölnir the mighty; 10
Giants and sorcerers
Cannot withstand it!

These are the gauntlets
Wherewith I wield it,
And hurl it afar off;
This is my girdle;
Whenever I brace it,
Strength is redoubled!

The light thou beholdest
Stream through the heavens,
In flashes of crimson,
Is but my red beard
Blown by the night-wind,
Affrighting the nations!

20

Jove is my brother;
Mine eyes are the lightning;
The wheels of my chariot
Roll in the thunder,
The blows of my hammer
Ring in the earthquake!

30

Force rules the world still,
Has ruled it, shall rule it;
Meekness is weakness,
Strength is triumphant,
Over the whole earth
Still is it Thor's-Day!

Thou art a God too,
O Galilean!
And thus single-handed
Unto the combat,
Gauntlet or Gospel,
Here I defy thee!

40

II. KING OLAF'S RETURN

And King Olaf heard the cry,
Saw the red light in the sky,
Laid his hand upon his sword,
As he leaned upon the railing,
And his ships went sailing, sailing
Northward into Drontheim fiord.

There he stood as one who dreamed;
And the red light glanced and gleamed
On the armor that he wore;
And he shouted, as the rifted
Streamers o'er him shook and shifted,
"I accept thy challenge, Thor!"

10

To avenge his father slain,
And reconquer realm and reign,
Came the youthful Olaf home,
Through the midnight sailing, sailing,
Listening to the wild wind's wailing,
And the dashing of the foam.

To his thoughts the sacred name
Of his mother Astrid came,
And the tale she oft had told
Of her flight by secret passes
Through the mountains and morasses,
To the home of Hakon old.

20

Then strange memories crowded back
Of Queen Gunhild's wrath and wrack,
And a hurried flight by sea;
Of grim Vikings, and the rapture
Of the sea-fight, and the capture,
And the life of slavery.

30

How a stranger watched his face
In the Esthonian market-place,
Scanned his features one by one,
Saying, "We should know each other;
I am Sigurd, Astrid's brother,
Thou art Olaf, Astrid's son!"

Then as Queen Allogia's page,
Old in honors, young in age,
Chief of all her men-at-arms;
Till vague whispers, and mysterious, 40
Reached King Valdemar, the imperious,
Filling him with strange alarms.

Then his cruisings o'er the seas,
Westward to the Hebrides,
And to Scilly's rocky shore;
And the hermit's cavern dismal,
Christ's great name and rites baptismal
In the ocean's rush and roar.

All these thoughts of love and strife
Glimmered through his lurid life, 50
As the stars' intenser light
Through the red flames o'er him trailing,
As his ships went sailing, sailing,
Northward in the summer night.

Trained for either camp or court,
Skilful in each manly sport,
Young and beautiful and tall;
Art of warfare, craft of chases,
Swimming, skating, snow-shoe races,
Excellent alike in all. 60

When at sea, with all his rowers,
He along the bending oars
Outside of his ship could run.

He the Smalsor Horn ascended,
And his shining shield suspended
On its summit, like a sun.

On the ship-rails he could stand,
Wield his sword with either hand,
And at once two javelins throw;
At all feasts where ale was strongest 70
Sat the merry monarch longest,
First to come and last to go.

Norway never yet had seen
One so beautiful of mien,
One so royal in attire,
When in arms completely furnished,
Harness gold-inlaid and burnished,
Mantle like a flame of fire.

Thus came Olaf to his own,
When upon the night-wind blown 80
Passed that cry along the shore;
And he answered, while the rifted
Streamers o'er him shook and shifted,
"I accept thy challenge, Thor!"

III. THORA OF RIMOL

"Thora of Rimol! hide me! hide me!
Danger and shame and death betide me!
For Olaf the King is hunting me down
Through field and forest, through thorp and town!"
Thus cried Jarl Hakon
To Thora, the fairest of women.

"Hakon Jarl! for the love I bear thee
Neither shall shame nor death come near thee!
But the hiding-place wherein thou must lie

Is the cave underneath the swine in the sty." 10

Thus to Jarl Hakon

Said Thora, the fairest of women.

So Hakon Jarl and his base thrall Karker
Crouched in the cave, than a dungeon darker,
As Olaf came riding, with men in mail,
Through the forest roads into Orkadale,
Demanding Jarl Hakon
Of Thora, the fairest of women.

"Rich and honored shall be whoever
The head of Hakon Jarl shall dissever!" 20

Hakon heard him, and Karker the slave,
Through the breathing-holes of the darksome cave.

Alone in her chamber

Wept Thora, the fairest of women.

Said Karker, the crafty, "I will not slay thee!
For all the king's gold I will never betray thee!"

"Then why dost thou turn so pale, O churl,
And then again black as the earth?" said the Earl.

More pale and more faithful

Was Thora, the fairest of women. 30

From a dream in the night the thrall started, saying,
"Round my neck a gold ring King Olaf was laying!"

And Hakon answered, "Beware of the king!
He will lay round thy neck a blood-red ring."

At the ring on her finger

Gazed Thora, the fairest of women.

At daybreak slept Hakon, with sorrows encumbered,
But screamed and drew up his feet as he slumbered;
The thrall in the darkness plunged with his knife,
And the Earl awakened no more in this life. 40

But wakeful and weeping

Sat Thora, the fairest of women.

At Nidarholm the priests are all singing,
Two ghastly heads on the gibbet are swinging;
One is Jarl Hakon's and one is his thrall's,
And the people are shouting from windows and walls;
While alone in her chamber
Swoons Thora, the fairest of women.

IV. QUEEN SIGRID THE HAUGHTY

Queen Sigrid the Haughty sat proud and aloft
In her chamber, that looked over meadow and croft.
Heart's dearest,
Why dost thou sorrow so?

The floor with tassels of fir was besprent,
Filling the room with their fragrant scent.

She heard the birds sing, she saw the sun shine,
The air of summer was sweeter than wine.

Like a sword without scabbard the bright river lay
Between her own kingdom and Norrøway. 10

But Olaf the King had sued for her hand,
The sword would be sheathed, the river be spanned.

Her maidens were seated around her knee,
Working bright figures in tapestry.

And one was singing the ancient rune
Of Brynhilda's love and the wrath of Gudrun.

And through it, and round it, and over it all
Sounded incessant the waterfall.

The Queen in her hand held a ring of gold,
From the door of Ladé's Temple old. 20

King Olaf had sent her this wedding gift,
But her thoughts as arrows were keen and swift.

She had given the ring to her goldsmiths twain,
Who smiled, as they handed it back again.

And Sigrid the Queen, in her haughty way,
Said, "Why do you smile, my goldsmiths, say?"

And they answered: "O Queen! if the truth must be told,
The ring is of copper, and not of gold!"

The lightning flashed o'er her forehead and cheek,
She only murmured, she did not speak:

30

"If in his gifts he can faithless be,
There will be no gold in his love to me."

A footstep was heard on the outer stair,
And in strode King Olaf with royal air.

He kissed the Queen's hand, and he whispered of love,
And swore to be true as the stars are above.

But she smiled with contempt as she answered: "O King,
Will you swear it, as Odin once swore, on the ring?"

And the King: "O speak not of Odin to me,
The wife of King Olaf a Christian must be."

40

Looking straight at the King, with her level brows,
She said, "I keep true to my faith and my vows."

Then the face of King Olaf was darkened with gloom,
He rose in his anger and strode through the room.

"Why, then, should I care to have thee?" he said,—
"A faded old woman, a heathenish jade!"

His zeal was stronger than fear or love,
And he struck the Queen in the face with his glove.

Then forth from the chamber in anger he fled,
And the wooden stairway shook with his tread. 50

Queen Sigrid the Haughty said under her breath,
"This insult, King Olaf, shall be thy death!"
Heart's dearest,
Why dost thou sorrow so?

V. THE SKERRY OF SHRIEKS

Now from all King Olaf's farms
His men-at-arms
Gathered on the Eve of Easter;
To his house at Angvalds-ness
Fast they press,
Drinking with the royal feaster.

Loudly through the wide-flung door
Came the roar
Of the sea upon the Skerry;
And its thunder loud and near 10
Reached the ear,
Mingling with their voices merry.

"Hark!" said Olaf to his Scald,
Halfred the Bald,
"Listen to that song, and learn it!
Half my kingdom would I give,
As I live,
If by such songs you would earn it!

"For of all the runes and rhymes
Of all times, 20
Best I like the ocean's dirges,

When the old harper heaves and rocks,
His hoary locks
Flowing and flashing in the surges!"

Halfred answered: "I am called
The Unappalled!
Nothing hinders me or daunts me.
Hearken to me, then, O King,
While I sing
The great Ocean Song that haunts me."

30

"I will hear your song sublime
Some other time,"
Says the drowsy monarch, yawning,
And retires; each laughing guest
Applauds the jest;
Then they sleep till day is dawning.

Pacing up and down the yard,
King Olaf's guard
Saw the sea-mist slowly creeping
O'er the sands, and up the hill,
Gathering still
Round the house where they were sleeping.

40

It was not the fog he saw,
Nor misty flaw,
That above the landscape brooded;
It was Eyvind Kallda's crew
Of warlocks blue
With their caps of darkness hooded!

Round and round the house they go,
Weaving slow
Magic circles to encumber
And imprison in their ring
Olaf the King,
As he helpless lies in slumber.

50

Then athwart the vapors dun
The Easter sun
Streamed with one broad track of splendor!
In their real forms appeared
The warlocks weird,
Awful as the Witch of Endor.

60

Blinded by the light that glared,
They groped and stared
Round about with steps unsteady;
From his window Olaf gazed,
And, amazed,
"Who are these strange people?" said he.

"Eyvind Kallda and his men!"
Answered then
From the yard a sturdy farmer;
While the men-at-arms apace
Filled the place,
Busily buckling on their armor.

70

From the gates they sallied forth,
South and north,
Scoured the island coast around them,
Seizing all the warlock band,
Foot and hand
On the Skerry's rocks they bound them.

And at eve the king again
Called his train,
And, with all the candles burning,
Silent sat and heard once more
The sullen roar
Of the ocean tides returning.

80

Shrieks and cries of wild despair
Filled the air,
Growing fainter as they listened;

Then the bursting surge alone
Sounded on;—
Thus the sorcerers were christened! 90

“Sing, O Scald, your song sublime,
Your ocean-rhyme,”
Cried King Olaf: “it will cheer me!”
Said the Scald, with pallid cheeks,
“The Skerry of Shrieks
Sings too loud for you to hear me!”

VI. THE WRAITH OF ODIN

The guests were loud, the ale was strong,
King Olaf feasted late and long;
The hoary Scalds together sang;
O'erhead the smoky rafters rang.
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

The door swung wide, with creak and din;
A blast of cold night-air came in,
And on the threshold shivering stood
A one-eyed guest, with cloak and hood.
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang. 10

The King exclaimed, “O graybeard pale!
Come warm thee with this cup of ale.”
The foaming draught the old man quaffed,
The noisy guests looked on and laughed.
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

Then spake the King: “Be not afraid;
Sit here by me.” The guest obeyed,
And, seated at the table, told
Tales of the sea, and Sagas old.
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang. 20

And ever, when the tale was o'er,
The King demanded yet one more;
Till Sigurd the Bishop smiling said,
" 'T is late, O King, and time for bed."
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

The King retired; the stranger guest
Followed and entered with the rest;
The lights were out, the pages gone,
But still the garrulous guest spake on.
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

30

As one who from a volume reads,
He spake of heroes and their deeds,
Of lands and cities he had seen,
And stormy gulfs that tossed between.
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

Then from his lips in music rolled
The Havamal of Odin old,
With sounds mysterious as the roar
Of billows on a distant shore.
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

40

"Do we not learn from runes and rhymes
Made by the gods in elder times,
And do not still the great Scalds teach
That silence better is than speech?"
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

Smiling at this, the King replied,
"Thy lore is by thy tongue belied;
For never was I so enthralled
Either by Saga-man or Scald."
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

50

The Bishop said, "Late hours we keep!
Night wanes, O King! 't is time for sleep!"

Then slept the King, and when he woke
The guest was gone, the morning broke.
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

They found the doors securely barred,
They found the watch-dog in the yard,
There was no footprint in the grass,
And none had seen the stranger pass.
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

60

King Olaf crossed himself and said:
"I know that Odin the Great is dead;
Sure is the triumph of our Faith,
The one-eyed stranger was his wraith."
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

VII. IRON-BEARD

Olaf the King, one summer morn,
Blew a blast on his bugle-horn,
Sending his signal through the land of Drontheim.

And to the Hus-Ting held at Mere
Gathered the farmers far and near,
With their war weapons ready to confront him.

Ploughing under the morning star,
Old Iron-Beard in Yriar
Heard the summons, chuckling with a low laugh.

He wiped the sweat-drops from his brow,
Unharnessed his horses from the plough,
And clattering came on horseback to King Olaf.

10

He was the churliest of the churls;
Little he cared for king or earls;
Bitter as home-brewed ale were his foaming passions.

Hodden-gray was the garb he wore,
And by the Hammer of Thor he swore;
He hated the narrow town, and all its fashions.

But he loved the freedom of his farm,
His ale at night, by the fireside warm, 20
Gudrun his daughter, with her flaxen tresses.

He loved his horses and his herds,
The smell of the earth, and the song of birds,
His well-filled barns, his brook with its water-cresses.

Huge and cumbersome was his frame;
His beard, from which he took his name,
Frosty and fierce, like that of Hymer the Giant.

So at the Hus-Ting he appeared,
The farmer of Yriar, Iron-Beard,
On horseback, in an attitude defiant. 30

And to King Olaf he cried aloud,
Out of the middle of the crowd,
That tossed about him like a stormy ocean:

"Such sacrifices shalt thou bring;
To Odin and to Thor, O King,
As other kings have done in their devotion!"

King Olaf answered: "I command
This land to be a Christian land;
Here is my Bishop who the folk baptizes!

"But if you ask me to restore 40
Your sacrifices, stained with gore,
Then will I offer human sacrifices!

"Not slaves and peasants shall they be,
But men of note and high degree,
Such men as Orm of Lyra and Kar of Gryting!"

Then to their Temple strode he in,
And loud behind him heard the din
Of his men-at-arms and the peasants fiercely fighting.

There in the Temple, carved in wood,
The image of great Odin stood, 50
And other gods, with Thor supreme among them.

King Olaf smote them with the blade
Of his huge war-axe, gold inlaid,
And downward shattered to the pavement flung them.

At the same moment rose without,
From the contending crowd, a shout,
A mingled sound of triumph and of wailing.

And there upon the trampled plain
The farmer Iron-Beard lay slain,
Midway between the assailed and the assailing. 60

King Olaf from the doorway spoke,
 "Choose ye between two things, my folk,
 To be baptized or given up to slaughter!"

And seeing their leader stark and dead,
The people with a murmur said,
“O King, baptize us with thy holy water.”

So all the Drontheim land became
A Christian land in name and fame,
In the old gods no more believing and trusting.

And as a blood-atonement, soon
King Olaf wed the fair Gudrun;
And thus in peace ended the Drontheim Hus-Ting!

VIII. GUDRUN

On King Olaf's bridal night
Shines the moon with tender light,
And across the chamber streams
Its tide of dreams.

At the fatal midnight hour,
When all evil things have power,
In the glimmer of the moon
Stands Gudrun.

Close against her heaving breast
Something in her hand is pressed; 10
Like an icicle, its sheen
Is cold and keen.

On the cairn are fixed her eyes
Where her murdered father lies,
And a voice remote and drear
She seems to hear.

What a bridal night is this!
Cold will be the dagger's kiss;
Laden with the chill of death
Is its breath. 20

Like the drifting snow she sweeps
To the couch where Olaf sleeps;
Suddenly he wakes and stirs,
His eyes meet hers.

"What is that," King Olaf said,
"Gleams so bright above thy head?
Wherefore standest thou so white
In pale moonlight?"

"'T is the bodkin that I wear
When at night I bind my hair;
It woke me falling on the floor;
'T is nothing more."

30

"Forests have ears, and fields have eyes;
Often treachery lurking lies
Underneath the fairest hair!
Gudrun, beware!"

Ere the earliest peep of morn
Blew King Olaf's bugle-horn;
And forever sundered ride
Bridegroom and bride!

40

IX. THANGBRAND THE PRIEST

Short of stature, large of limb,
Burly face and russet beard,
All the women stared at him,
When in Iceland he appeared.
"Look!" they said,
With nodding head,
"There goes Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest."

All the prayers he knew by rote,
He could preach like Chrysostome,
From the Fathers he could quote,
He had even been at Rome.
A learned clerk,
A man of mark,
Was this Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

10

He was quarrelsome and loud,
And impatient of control,
Boisterous in the market crowd,
Boisterous at the wassail-bowl,

Everywhere
Would drink and swear,
Swaggering Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest. 20

In his house this malcontent
Could the King no longer bear,
So to Iceland he was sent
To convert the heathen there,
And away
One summer day
Sailed this Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

There in Iceland, o'er their books
Pored the people day and night,
But he did not like their looks, 30
Nor the songs they used to write.
"All this rhyme
Is waste of time!"
Grumbled Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

To the alehouse, where he sat,
Came the Scalds and Saga-men;
Is it to be wondered at
That they quarrelled now and then,
When o'er his beer 40
Began to leer
Drunken Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest?

All the folk in Altafiord
Boasted of their island grand;
Saying in a single word,
"Iceland is the finest land
That the sun
Doth shine upon!"
Loud laughed Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

And he answered: "What's the use 50
Of this bragging up and down,

When three women and one goose
 Make a market in your town!"
 Every Scald
 Satires scrawled
On poor Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

Something worse they did than that;
 And what vexed him most of all
Was a figure in shovel hat,
 Drawn in charcoal on the wall;
 With words that go
 Sprawling below,
"This is Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest."

60

Hardly knowing what he did,
 Then he smote them might and main,
Thorvald Veile and Veterlid
 Lay there in the alehouse slain.
 "To-day we are gold,
 To-morrow mould!"
Muttered Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

70

Much in fear of axe and rope,
 Back to Norway sailed he then.
"O, King Olaf! little hope
 Is there of these Iceland men!"
 Meekly said,
 With bending head,
Pious Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

X. RAUD THE STRONG

"All the old gods are dead,
All the wild warlocks fled;
But the White Christ lives and reigns,
And throughout my wide domains
His Gospel shall be spread!"
 On the Evangelists
Thus swore King Olaf.

But still in dreams of the night
Beheld he the crimson light,
And heard the voice that defied
Him who was crucified,
And challenged him to the fight.
 To Sigurd the Bishop
 King Olaf confessed it. 10

And Sigurd the Bishop said,
"The old gods are not dead,
For the great Thor still reigns,
And among the Jarls and Thaness
The old witchcraft still is spread."
 Thus to King Olaf
 Said Sigurd the Bishop. 20

"Far north in the Salten Fiord,
By rapine, fire, and sword,
Lives the Viking, Raud the Strong;
All the Godoe Isles belong
To him and his heathen horde."
 Thus went on speaking
 Sigurd the Bishop.

"A warlock, a wizard is he,
And lord of the wind and the sea;
And whichever way he sails,
He has ever favoring gales,
By his craft in sorcery."
 Here the sign of the cross
 Made devoutly King Olaf. 30

"With rites that we both abhor,
He worships Odin and Thor;
So it cannot yet be said,
That all the old gods are dead,

And the warlocks are no more,"
Flushing with anger
Said Sigurd the Bishop.

40

Then King Olaf cried aloud:
"I will talk with this mighty Raud,
And along the Salten Fiord
Preach the Gospel with my sword,
Or be brought back in my shroud!"
So northward from Drontheim
Sailed King Olaf!

XI. BISHOP SIGURD AT SALTEN FIORD

Loud the angry wind was wailing
As King Olaf's ships came sailing
Northward out of Drontheim haven
To the mouth of Salten Fiord.

Though the flying sea-spray drenches
Fore and aft the rowers' benches,
Not a single heart is craven
Of the champions there on board.

All without the Fiord was quiet,
But within it storm and riot,
Such as on his Viking cruises
Raud the Strong was wont to ride.

10

And the sea through all its tide-ways
Swept the reeling vessels sideways,
As the leaves are swept through sluices,
When the flood-gates open wide.

"'T is the warlock! 't is the demon
Raud!" cried Sigurd to the seamen;
"But the Lord is not affrighted
By the witchcraft of his foes."

20

To the ship's bow he ascended,
By his choristers attended,
Round him were the tapers lighted,
And the sacred incense rose.

On the bow stood Bishop Sigurd,
In his robes, as one transfigured,
And the Crucifix he planted
High amid the rain and mist.

Then with holy water sprinkled
All the ship; the mass-bells tinkled: 30
Loud the monks around him chanted,
Loud he read the Evangelist.

As into the Fiord they darted,
On each side the water parted;
Down a path like silver molten
Steadily rowed King Olaf's ships;

Steadily burned all night the tapers,
And the White Christ through the vapors
Gleamed across the Fiord of Salten,
As through John's Apocalypse,— 40

Till at last they reached Raud's dwelling
On the little isle of Gelling;
Not a guard was at the doorway,
Not a glimmer of light was seen.

But at anchor, carved and gilded,
Lay the dragon-ship he builded;
'T was the grandest ship in Norway,
With its crest and scales of green.

Up the stairway, softly creeping,
To the loft where Raud was sleeping, 50

With their fists they burst asunder
Bolt and bar that held the door.

Drunken with sleep and ale they found him,
Dragged him from his bed and bound him,
While he stared with stupid wonder
At the look and garb they wore.

Then King Olaf said: "O Sea-King!
Little time have we for speaking,
Choose between the good and evil;
Be baptized! or thou shalt die!"

60

But in scorn the heathen scoffer
Answered: "I disdain thine offer;
Neither fear I God nor Devil;
Thee and thy Gospel I defy!"

Then between his jaws distended,
When his frantic struggles ended,
Through King Olaf's horn an adder,
Touched by fire, they forced to glide.

Sharp his tooth was as an arrow,
As he gnawed through bone and marrow;
But without a groan or shudder,
Raud the Strong blaspheming died.

70

Then baptized they all that region,
Swarthy Lap and fair Norwegian,
Far as swims the salmon, leaping,
Up the streams of Salten Fiord.

In their temples Thor and Odin
Lay in dust and ashes trodden,
As King Olaf, onward sweeping,
Preached the Gospel with his sword.

80

Then he took the carved and gilded
Dragon-ship that Raud had builded,
And the tiller single-handed
Grasping, steered into the main.

Southward sailed the sea-gulls o'er him,
Southward sailed the ship that bore him,
Till at Drontheim haven landed
Olaf and his crew again.

XII. KING OLAF'S CHRISTMAS

At Drontheim, Olaf the King
Heard the bells of Yule-tide ring,
As he sat in his banquet-hall,
Drinking the nut-brown ale,
With his bearded Berserks hale
And tall.

Three days his Yule-tide feasts
He held with Bishops and Priests,
And his horn filled up to the brim;
But the ale was never too strong,
Nor the Saga-man's tale too long,
For him.

10

O'er his drinking-horn, the sign
He made of the cross divine,
As he drank, and muttered his prayers;
But the Berserks evermore
Made the sign of the Hammer of Thor
Over theirs.

The gleams of the fire-light dance
Upon helmet and hauberk and lance,
And laugh in the eyes of the King;
And he cries to Halfred the Scald,

20

Gray-bearded, wrinkled, and bald,
"Sing!"

"Sing me a song divine,
With a sword in every line,
And this shall be thy reward."
And he loosened the belt at his waist,
And in front of the singer placed
His sword.

30

"Quern-biter of Hakon the Good,
Wherewith at a stroke he hewed
The millstone through and through,
And Foot-breadth of Thoralf the Strong,
Were neither so broad nor so long,
Nor so true."

Then the Scald took his harp and sang,
And loud through the music rang
The sound of that shining word;
And the harp-strings a clangor made,
As if they were struck with the blade
Of a sword.

40

And the Berserks round about
Broke forth into a shout
That made the rafters ring:
They smote with their fists on the board,
And shouted, "Long live the Sword,
And the King!"

But the King said, "O my son,
I miss the bright word in one
Of thy measures and thy rhymes."
And Halfred the Scald replied,
"In another 't was multiplied
Three times."

50

Then King Olaf raised the hilt
Of iron, cross-shaped and gilt,
And said, "Do not refuse;
Count well the gain and the loss,
Thor's hammer or Christ's cross:
Choose!"

60

And Halfred the Scald said, "This
In the name of the Lord I kiss,
Who on it was crucified!"
And a shout went round the board,
"In the name of Christ the Lord,
Who died!"

Then over the waste of snows
The noonday sun uprose,
Through the driving mists revealed,
Like the lifting of the Host,
By incense-clouds almost
Concealed.

70

On the shining wall a vast
And shadowy cross was cast
From the hilt of the lifted sword,
And in foaming cups of ale
The Berserks drank "Was-hael!
To the Lord!"

XIII. THE BUILDING OF THE LONG SERPENT

Thorberg Skafting, master-builder,
In his ship-yard by the sea,
Whistling, said, "It would bewilder
Any man but Thorberg Skafting,
Any man but me!"

Near him lay the Dragon stranded,
Built of old by Raud the Strong,

And King Olaf had commanded
He should build another Dragon,
Twice as large and long.

10

Therefore whistled Thorberg Skafting,
As he sat with half-closed eyes,
And his head turned sideways, drafting
That new vessel for King Olaf
Twice the Dragon's size.

Round him busily hewed and hammered
Mallet huge and heavy axe;
Workmen laughed and sang and clamored;
Whirred the wheels, that into rigging
Spun the shining flax!

20

All this tumult heard the master,—
It was music to his ear;
Fancy whispered all the faster,
“Men shall hear of Thorberg Skafting
For a hundred year!”

Workmen sweating at the forges
Fashioned iron bolt and bar,
Like a warlock's midnight orgies
Smoked and bubbled the black caldron
With the boiling tar.

30

Did the warlocks mingle in it,
Thorberg Skafting, any curse?
Could you not be gone a minute
But some mischief must be doing,
Turning bad to worse?

'T was an ill wind that came wafting,
From his homestead words of woe;
To his farm went Thorberg Skafting,

Oft repeating to his workmen,
Build ye thus and so.

40

After long delays returning
Came the master back by night;
To his ship-yard longing, yearning,
Hurried he, and did not leave it
Till the morning's light.

"Come and see my ship, my darling!"
On the morrow said the King;
"Finished now from keel to carling;
Never yet was seen in Norway
Such a wondrous thing!"

50

In the ship-yard, idly talking,
At the ship the workmen stared:
Some one, all their labor balking,
Down her sides had cut deep gashes,
Not a plank was spared!

'Death be to the evil-doer!"
With an oath King Olaf spoke;
"But rewards to his pursuer!"
And with wrath his face grew redder
Than his scarlet cloak.

60

Straight the master-builder, smiling,
Answered thus the angry King:
"Cease blaspheming and reviling,
Olaf, it was Thorberg Skafting
Who has done this thing!"

Then he chipped and smoothed the planking,
Till the King, delighted, swore,
With much lauding and much thanking,
"Handsomest is now my Dragon
Than she was before!"

70

Seventy ells and four extended
On the grass the vessel's keel;
High above it, gilt and splendid,
Rose the figure-head ferocious
With its crest of steel.

Then they launched her from the tressels,
In the ship-yard by the sea;
She was the grandest of all vessels,
Never ship was built in Norway
Half so fine as she!

80

The Long Serpent was she christened,
'Mid the roar of cheer on cheer!
They who to the Saga listened
Heard the name of Thorberg Skafting
For a hundred year!

XIV. THE CREW OF THE LONG SERPENT

Safe at anchor in Drontheim bay
King Olaf's fleet assembled lay,
And, striped with white and blue,
Downward fluttered sail and banner,
As alights the screaming lanner;
Lustily cheered, in their wild manner,
The Long Serpent's crew

Her forecastle man was Ulf the Red;
Like a wolf's was his shaggy head,
His teeth as large and white;
His beard, of gray and russet blended,
Round as a swallow's nest descended;
As standard-bearer he defended
Olaf's flag in the fight.

10

Near him Kolbiorn had his place,
Like the King in garb and face,
So gallant and so hale;

Every cabin-boy and varlet
Wondered at his cloak of scarlet;
Like a river, frozen and star-lit, 20
Gleamed his coat of mail.

By the bulkhead, tall and dark,
Stood Thrand Rame of Thelemark,
A figure gaunt and grand;
On his hairy arm imprinted
Was an anchor, azure-tinted;
Like Thor's hammer, huge and dinted
Was his brawny hand.

Einar Tamberskelver, bare
To the winds his golden hair, 30
By the mainmast stood;
Graceful was his form, and slender,
And his eyes were deep and tender
As a woman's, in the splendor
Of her maidenhood.

In the fore-hold Biorn and Bork
Watched the sailors at their work:
Heavens! how they swore!
Thirty men they each commanded,
Iron-sinewed, horny-handed, 40
Shoulders broad, and chests expanded,
Tugging at the oar.

These, and many more like these,
With King Olaf sailed the seas,
Till the waters vast
Filled them with a vague devotion,
With the freedom and the motion,
With the roll and roar of ocean
And the sounding blast.

When they landed from the fleet, 50
How they roared through Drontheim's street,
 Boisterous as the gale!
How they laughed and stamped and pounded,
Till the tavern roof resounded,
And the host looked on astounded
 As they drank the ale!

Never saw the wild North Sea
Such a gallant company
 Sail its billows blue!
Never, while they cruised and quarrelled, 60
Old King Gorm, or Blue-Tooth Harald,
Owned a ship so well apparelled,
 Boasted such a crew!

XV. A LITTLE BIRD IN THE AIR

A little bird in the air
Is singing of Thyri the fair,
 The sister of Svend the Dane;
And the song of the garrulous bird
In the streets of the town is heard,
 And repeated again and again.
 Hoist up your sails of silk,
 And flee away from each other.

To King Burislaf, it is said,
Was the beautiful Thyri wed, 10
 And a sorrowful bride went she;
And after a week and a day,
She has fled away and away,
 From his town by the stormy sea.
 Hoist up your sails of silk,
 And flee away from each other.

They say, that through heat and through cold,
Through weald, they say, and through wold,
 By day and by night, they say,

She has fled; and the gossips report 20
 She has come to King Olaf's court,
 And the town is all in dismay.
 Hoist up your sails of silk,
 And flee away from each other.

It is whispered King Olaf has seen,
 Has talked with the beautiful Queen;
 And they wonder how it will end;
 For surely, if here she remain,
 It is war with King Svend the Dane, 30
 And King Burislaf the Vend!
 Hoist up your sails of silk,
 And flee away from each other.

O greatest wonder of all!
 It is published in hamlet and hall,
 It roars like a flame that is fanned!
 The King—yes, Olaf the King—
 Has wedded her with his ring,
 And Thyri is Queen in the land!
 Hoist up your sails of silk,
 And flee away from each other. 40

XVI. QUEEN THYRI AND THE ANGELICA STALKS

Northward over Drontheim,
 Flew the clamorous sea-gulls,
 Sang the lark and linnet
 From the meadows green;

Weeping in her chamber,
 Lonely and unhappy,
 Sat the Drottning Thyri,
 Sat King Olaf's Queen.

In at all the windows
 Streamed the pleasant sunshine, 10

On the roof above her
Softly cooed the dove;

But the sound she heard not,
Nor the sunshine heeded,
For the thoughts of Thyri
Were not thoughts of love.

Then King Olaf entered,
Beautiful as morning,
Like the sun at Easter
Shone his happy face;

20

In his hand he carried
Angelicas uprooted,
With delicious fragrance
Filling all the place.

Like a rainy midnight
Sat the Drottning Thyri,
Even the smile of Olaf
Could not cheer her gloom;

Nor the stalks he gave her
With a gracious gesture,
And with words as pleasant
As their own perfume.

30

In her hands he placed them,
And her jewelled fingers
Through the green leaves glistened
Like the dews of morn;

But she cast them from her,
Haughty and indignant,
On the floor she threw them
With a look of scorn.

40

"Richer presents," said she,
"Gave King Harald Gormson
To the Queen, my mother,
Than such worthless weeds;

"When he ravaged Norway,
Laying waste the kingdom,
Seizing scatt and treasure
For her royal needs.

"But thou darest not venture
Through the Sound to Vendland, 50
My domains to rescue
From King Burislaf;

"Lest King Svend of Denmark,
Forked Beard, my brother,
Scatter all thy vessels
As the wind the chaff."

Then up sprang King Olaf,
Like a reindeer bounding,
With an oath he answered
Thus the luckless Queen: 60

"Never yet did Olaf
Fear King Svend of Denmark;
This right hand shall hale him
By his forked chin!"

Then he left the chamber,
Thundering through the doorway,
Loud his steps resounded
Down the outer stair.

Smarting with the insult,
Through the streets of Drontheim 70

Strode he red and wrathful,
With his stately air.

All his ships he gathered,
Summoned all his forces,
Making his war levy
In the region round.

Down the coast of Norway,
Like a flock of sea-gulls,
Sailed the fleet of Olaf
Through the Danish Sound.

80

With his own hand fearless,
Steered he the Long Serpent,
Strained the creaking cordage,
Bent each boom and gaff;

Till in Vendland landing,
The domains of Thyri
He redeemed and rescued
From King Burislaf.

Then said Olaf, laughing,
"Not ten yoke of oxen
Have the power to draw us
Like a woman's hair!

90

"Now will I confess it,
Better things are jewels
Than angelica stalks are
For a queen to wear."

XVII. KING SVEND OF THE FORKED BEARD

Loudly the sailors cheered
Svend of the Forked Beard,

As with his fleet he steered
 Southward to Vendland;
Where with their courses hauled
All were together called,
Under the Isle of Svald
 Near to the mainland.

After Queen Gunhild's death,
So the old Saga saith, 10
Plighted King Svend his faith
 To Sigrid the Haughty;
And to avenge his bride,
Soothing her wounded pride,
Over the waters wide
 King Olaf sought he.

Still on her scornful face,
Blushing with deep disgrace,
Bore she the crimson trace
 Of Olaf's gauntlet; 20
Like a malignant star,
Blazing in heaven afar,
Red shone the angry scar
 Under her frontlet.

Oft to King Svend she spake,
"For thine own honor's sake
Shalt thou swift vengeance take
 On the vile coward!"
Until the King at last, 30
Gusty and overcast,
Like a tempestuous blast
 Threatened and lowered.

Soon as the Spring appeared,
Svend of the Forked Beard
High his red standard reared,
 Eager for battle;

While every warlike Dane,
Seizing his arms again,
Left all unsown the grain,
 Unhoused the cattle.

40

Likewise the Swedish King
Summoned in haste a Thing,
Weapons and men to bring
 In aid of Denmark;
Eric the Norseman, too,
As the war-tidings flew,
Sailed with a chosen crew
 From Lapland and Finmark.

So upon Easter day
Sailed the three kings away,
Out of the sheltered bay,
 In the bright season;
With them Earl Sigvald came,
Eager for spoil and fame;
Pity that such a name
 Stooped to such treason!

50

Safe under Svald at last,
Now were their anchors cast,
Safe from the sea and blast,
 Plotted the three kings;
While, with a base intent,
Southward Earl Sigvald went,
On a foul errand bent,
 Unto the Sea-kings.

60

Thence to hold on his course
Unto King Olaf's force,
Lying within the hoarse
 Mouths of Stet-haven;
Him to ensnare and bring

Unto the Danish king, 70
Who his dead corse would fling
Forth to the raven!

XVIII. KING OLAF AND EARL SIGVALD

On the gray sea-sands
King Olaf stands,
Northward and seaward
He points with his hands.

With eddy and whirl
The sea-tides curl,
Washing the sandals
Of Sigvald the Earl.

The mariners shout,
The ships swing about, 10
The yards are all hoisted,
The sails flutter out.

The war-horns are played,
The anchors are weighed,
Like moths in the distance
The sails flit and fade.

The sea is like lead,
The harbor lies dead,
As a corse on the sea-shore,
Whose spirit has fled! 20

On that fatal day,
The histories say,
Seventy vessels
Sailed out of the bay.

But soon scattered wide
O'er the billows they ride,

While Sigvald and Olaf
Sail side by side.

Cried the Earl: "Follow me!
I your pilot will be,
For I know all the channels
Where flows the deep sea!"

30

So into the strait
Where his foes lie in wait,
Gallant King Olaf
Sails to his fate!

Then the sea-fog veils
The ships and their sails;
Queen Sigrid the Haughty,
Thy vengeance prevails!

40

XIX. KING OLAF'S WAR-HORNS

"Strike the sails!" King Olaf said;
"Never shall men of mine take flight;
Never away from battle I fled,
Never away from my foes!
Let God dispose
Of my life in the fight!"

"Sound the horns!" said Olaf the King;
And suddenly through the drifting brume
The blare of the horns began to ring,
Like the terrible trumpet shock
Of Regnarock,
On the Day of Doom!

10

Louder and louder the war-horns sang
Over the level floor of the flood;
All the sails came down with a clang,

And there in the mist overhead
The sun hung red
As a drop of blood.

Drifting down on the Danish fleet
Three together the ships were lashed, 20
So that neither should turn and retreat;
In the midst, but in front of the rest,
The burnished crest
Of the Serpent flashed.

King Olaf stood on the quarter-deck,
With bow of ash and arrows of oak,
His gilded shield was without a fleck,
His helmet inlaid with gold,
And in many a fold
Hung his crimson cloak. 30

On the forecastle Ulf the Red
Watched the lashing of the ships;
"If the Serpent lie so far ahead,
We shall have hard work of it here,"
Said he with a sneer
On his bearded lips.

King Olaf laid an arrow on string,
"Have I a coward on board?" said he.
"Shoot it another way, O King!"
Sullenly answered Ulf, 40
The old sea-wolf;
"You have need of me!"

In front came Svend, the King of the Danes,
Sweeping down with his fifty rowers;
To the right, the Swedish king with his thanes;
And on board of the Iron Beard
Earl Eric steered
To the left with his oars.

"These soft Danes and Swedes," said the King,
"At home with their wives had better stay, 50
Than come within reach of my Serpent's sting:
But where Eric the Norseman leads
Heroic deeds
Will be done to-day!"

Then as together the vessels crashed,
Eric severed the cables of hide,
With which King Olaf's ships were lashed,
And left them to drive and drift
With the currents swift
Of the outward tide. 60

Louder the war-horns growl and snarl,
Sharper the dragons bite and sting!
Eric the son of Hakon Jarl
A death-drink salt as the sea
Pledges to thee,
Olaf the King!

XX. EINAR TAMBERSKELVER

It was Einar Tamberskelver
Stood beside the mast;
From his yew-bow, tipped with silver,
Flew the arrows fast;
Aimed at Eric unavailing,
As he sat concealed,
Half behind the quarter-railing,
Half behind his shield.

First an arrow struck the tiller,
Just above his head; 10
"Sing, O Eyvind Skaldaspiller,"
Then Earl Eric said.

"Sing the song of Hakon dying,
Sing his funeral wail!"
And another arrow flying
Grazed his coat of mail.

Turning to a Lapland yeoman,
As the arrow passed,
Said Earl Eric, "Shoot that bowman
Standing by the mast."
Sooner than the word was spoken
Flew the yeoman's shaft;
Einar's bow in twain was broken,
Einar only laughed.

20

"What was that?" said Olaf, standing
On the quarter-deck.
"Something heard I like the stranding
Of a shattered wreck."
Einar then, the arrow taking
From the loosened string,
Answered, "That was Norway breaking
From thy hand, O King!"

30

"Thou art but a poor diviner,"
Straightway Olaf said;
"Take my bow, and swifter, Einar,
Let thy shafts be sped."
Of his bows the fairest choosing,
Reached he from above;
Einar saw the blood-drops oozing
Through his iron glove.

40

But the bow was thin and narrow;
At the first assay,
O'er its head he drew the arrow,
Flung the bow away;

Said, with hot and angry temper
Flushing in his cheek,
"Olaf! for so great a Kämper
Are thy bows too weak!"

Then, with smile of joy defiant
On his beardless lip,
Scaled he, light and self-reliant,
Eric's dragon-ship.
Loose his golden locks were flowing,
Bright his armor gleamed;
Like Saint Michael overthrowing
Lucifer he seemed.

50

XXI. KING OLAF'S DEATH-DRINK

All day has the battle raged,
All day have the ships engaged,
But not yet is assuaged
The vengeance of Eric the Earl.

The decks with blood are red,
The arrows of death are sped,
The ships are filled with the dead,
And the spears the champions hurl.

They drift as wrecks on the tide,
The grappling-irons are plied,
The boarders climb up the side,
The shouts are feeble and few.

10

Ah! never shall Norway again
See her sailors come back o'er the main;
They all lie wounded or slain,
Or asleep in the billows blue!

On the deck stands Olaf the King,
Around him whistle and sing

The spears that the foemen fling,
And the stones they hurl with their hands. 20

In the midst of the stones and the spears,
Kolbiorn, the marshal, appears,
His shield in the air he uprears,
By the side of King Olaf he stands.

Over the slippery wreck
Of the Long Serpent's deck
Sweeps Eric with hardly a check,
His lips with anger are pale;

He hews with his axe at the mast,
Till it falls, with the sails overcast, 30
Like a snow-covered pine in the vast
Dim forests of Orkadale.

Seeking King Olaf then,
He rushes aft with his men,
As a hunter into the den
Of the bear, when he stands at bay.

"Remember Jarl Hakon!" he cries;
When lo! on his wondering eyes,
Two kingly figures arise,
Two Olafs in warlike array! 40

Then Kolbiorn speaks in the ear
Of King Olaf a word of cheer,
In a whisper that none may hear,
With a smile on his tremulous lip;

Two shields raised high in the air,
Two flashes of golden hair,
Two scarlet meteors' glare,
And both have leaped from the ship.

Earl Eric's men in the boats
Seize Kolbiorn's shield as it floats, 50
And cry, from their hairy throats,
"See! it is Olaf the King!"

While far on the opposite side
Floats another shield on the tide,
Like a jewel set in the wide
Sea-current's eddying ring.

There is told a wonderful tale,
How the King stripped off his mail,
Like leaves of the brown sea-kale,
As he swam beneath the main; 60

But the young grew old and gray,
And never, by night or by day,
In his kingdom of Norrøway
Was King Olaf seen again!

XXII. THE NUN OF NIDAROS

In the convent of Drontheim,
Alone in her chamber
Knelt Astrid the Abbess,
At midnight, adoring,
Beseeching, entreating
The Virgin and Mother.

She heard in the silence
The voice of one speaking,
Without in the darkness,
In gusts of the night-wind, 10
Now louder, now nearer,
Now lost in the distance.

The voice of a stranger
It seemed as she listened,

Of some one who answered,
Beseeching, imploring,
A cry from afar off
She could not distinguish.

The voice of Saint John,
The beloved disciple,
Who wandered and waited
The Master's appearance,
Alone in the darkness,
Unsheltered and friendless.

20

"It is accepted,
The angry defiance,
The challenge of battle!
It is accepted,
But not with the weapons
Of war that thou wieldest!

30

"Cross against corselet,
Love against hatred,
Peace-cry for war-cry!
Patience is powerful;
He that o'ercometh
Hath power o'er the nations!

"As torrents in summer,
Half dried in their channels,
Suddenly rise, though the
Sky is still cloudless,
For rain has been falling
Far off at their fountains;

40

"So hearts that are fainting
Grow full to o'erflowing,
And they that behold it
Marvel, and know not

That God at their fountains
Far off has been raining!

“Stronger than steel
Is the sword of the Spirit; 50
Swifter than arrows
The light of the truth is,
Greater than anger
Is love, and subdueth!

“Thou art a phantom,
A shape of the sea-mist,
A shape of the brumal
Rain, and the darkness
Fearful and formless;
Day dawns and thou art not! 60

“The dawn is not distant,
Nor is the night starless;
Love is eternal!
God is still God, and
His faith shall not fail us;
Christ is eternal!”

1860

THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH

It was the season, when through all the land
The merle and mavis build, and building sing
Those lovely lyrics, written by His hand,
Whom Saxon Cædmon calls the Blithe-heart King;
When on the boughs the purple buds expand,
The banners of the vanguard of the Spring,
And rivulets, rejoicing, rush and leap,
And wave their fluttering signals from the steep.

The robin and the bluebird, piping loud,
Filled all the blossoming orchards with their glee; 10

The sparrows chirped as if they still were proud
Their race in Holy Writ should mentioned be;
And hungry crows, assembled in a crowd,
Clamored their piteous prayer incessantly,
Knowing who hears the ravens cry, and said:
"Give us, O Lord, this day our daily bread!"

Across the Sound the birds of passage sailed,
Speaking some unknown language strange and sweet
Of tropic isle remote, and passing hailed
The village with the cheers of all their fleet; 20
Or quarrelling together, laughed and railed
Like foreign sailors, landed in the street
Of seaport town, and with outlandish noise
Of oaths and gibberish frightening girls and boys.

Thus came the jocund Spring in Killingworth,
In fabulous days, some hundred years ago;
And thrifty farmers, as they tilled the earth,
Heard with alarm the cawing of the crow,
That mingled with the universal mirth,
Cassandra-like, prognosticating woe; 30
They shook their heads, and doomed with dreadful words
To swift destruction the whole race of birds.

And a town-meeting was convened straightway
To set a price upon the guilty heads
Of these marauders, who, in lieu of pay,
Levied black-mail upon the garden beds
And cornfields, and beheld without dismay
The awful scarecrow, with his fluttering shreds;
The skeleton that waited at their feast,
Whereby their sinful pleasure was increased. 40

Then from his house, a temple painted white,
With fluted columns, and a roof of red,
The Squire came forth, august and splendid sight!
Slowly descending, with majestic tread,

Three flights of steps, nor looking left nor right,
Down the long street he walked, as one who said,
"A town that boasts inhabitants like me
Can have no lack of good society!"

The Parson, too, appeared, a man austere,
The instinct of whose nature was to kill; 50
The wrath of God he preached from year to year,
And read, with fervor, Edwards on the Will;
His favorite pastime was to slay the deer
In Summer on some Adirondac hill;
E'en now, while walking down the rural lane,
He lopped the wayside lilies with his cane.

From the Academy, whose belfry crowned
The hill of Science with its vane of brass,
Came the Preceptor, gazing idly round,
Now at the clouds, and now at the green grass, 60
And all absorbed in reveries profound
Of fair Almira in the upper class,
Who was, as in a sonnet he had said,
As pure as water, and as good as bread.

And next the Deacon issued from his door,
In his voluminous neck-cloth, white as snow;
A suit of sable bombazine he wore;
His form was ponderous, and his step was slow;
There never was so wise a man before;
He seemed the incarnate "Well, I told you so!" 70
And to perpetuate his great renown
There was a street named after him in town.

These came together in the new town-hall,
With sundry farmers from the region round.
The Squire presided, dignified and tall,
His air impressive and his reasoning sound;
Ill fared it with the birds, both great and small;
Hardly a friend in all that crowd they found,

But enemies enough, who every one
Charged them with all the crimes beneath the sun. 80

When they had ended, from his place apart
Rose the Preceptor, to redress the wrong,
And, trembling like a steed before the start,
Looked round bewildered on the expectant throng;
Then thought of fair Almira, and took heart
To speak out what was in him, clear and strong,
Alike regardless of their smile or frown,
And quite determined not to be laughed down.

"Plato, anticipating the Reviewers,
From his Republic banished without pity 90
The Poets; in this little town of yours,
You put to death, by means of a Committee,
The ballad-singers and the Troubadours,
The street-musicians of the heavenly city,
The birds, who make sweet music for us all
In our dark hours, as David did for Saul.

"The thrush that carols at the dawn of day
From the green steeples of the piny wood;
The oriole in the elm; the noisy jay,
Jargoning like a foreigner at his food; 100
The bluebird balanced on some topmost spray,
Flooding with melody the neighborhood;
Linnet and meadow-lark, and all the throng
That dwell in nests, and have the gift of song.

"You slay them all! and wherefore? for the gain
Of a scant handful more or less of wheat,
Or rye, or barley, or some other grain,
Scratched up at random by industrious feet,
Searching for worm or weevil after rain!
Or a few cherries, that are not so sweet 110
As are the songs these uninvited guests
Sing at their feast with comfortable breasts.

“Do you ne’er think what wondrous beings these?
Do you ne’er think who made them and who taught
The dialect they speak, where melodies
Alone are the interpreters of thought?
Whose household words are songs in many keys,
Sweeter than instrument of man e’er caught!
Whose habitations in the tree-tops even
Are half-way houses on the road to heaven! 120

“Think, every morning when the sun peeps through
The dim, leaf-latticed windows of the grove,
How jubilant the happy birds renew
Their old, melodious madrigals of love!
And when you think of this, remember too
’T is always morning somewhere, and above
The awakening continents, from shore to shore,
Somewhere the birds are singing evermore.

“Think of your woods and orchards without birds!
Of empty nests that cling to boughs and beams 130
As in an idiot’s brain remembered words
Hang empty ’mid the cobwebs of his dreams!
Will bleat of flocks or bellowing of herds
Make up for the lost music, when your teams
Drag home the stingy harvest, and no more
The feathered gleaners follow to your door?

“What! would you rather see the incessant stir
Of insects in the windrows of the hay,
And hear the locust and the grasshopper
Their melancholy hurdy-gurdies play? 140
Is this more pleasant to you than the whir
Of meadow-lark, and her sweet roundelay,
Or twitter of little field-fares, as you take
Your nooning in the shade of bush and brake?

“You call them thieves and pillagers; but know,
They are the wingèd wardens of your farms,

Who from the cornfields drive the insidious foe,
And from your harvests keep a hundred harms;
Even the blackest of them all, the crow,
Renders good service as your man-at-arms, 150
Crushing the beetle in his coat of mail,
And crying havoc on the slug and snail.

"How can I teach your children gentleness,
And mercy to the weak, and reverence
For Life, which, in its weakness or excess,
Is still a gleam of God's omnipotence,
Or Death, which, seeming darkness, is no less
The selfsame light, although averted hence,
When by your laws, your actions, and your speech,
You contradict the very things I teach?" 160

With this he closed; and through the audience went
A murmur, like the rustle of dead leaves;
The farmers laughed and nodded, and some bent
Their yellow heads together like their sheaves;
Men have no faith in fine-spun sentiment
Who put their trust in bullocks and in bees.
The birds were doomed; and, as the record shows,
A bounty offered for the heads of crows.

There was another audience out of reach,
Who had no voice nor vote in making laws, 170
But in the papers read his little speech,
And crowned his modest temples with applause;
They made him conscious, each one more than each,
He still was victor, vanquished in their cause.
Sweetest of all the applause he won from thee,
O fair Almira at the Academy!

And so the dreadful massacre began;
O'er fields and orchards, and o'er woodland crests,
The ceaseless fusillade of terror ran.
Dead fell the birds, with blood-stains on their breasts, 180

Or wounded crept away from sight of man,
While the young died of famine in their nests;
A slaughter to be told in groans, not words,
The very St. Bartholomew of Birds!

The Summer came, and all the birds were dead;
The days were like hot coals; the very ground
Was burned to ashes; in the orchards fed
Myriads of caterpillars, and around
The cultivated fields and garden beds
Hosts of devouring insects crawled, and found
No foe to check their march, till they had made
The land a desert without leaf or shade.

190

Devoured by worms, like Herod, was the town,
Because, like Herod, it had ruthlessly
Slaughtered the Innocents. From the trees spun down
The canker-worms upon the passers-by,
Upon each woman's bonnet, shawl, and gown,
Who shook them off with just a little cry;
They were the terror of each favorite walk,
The endless theme of all the village talk.

200

The farmers grew impatient, but a few
Confessed their error, and would not complain,
For after all, the best thing one can do
When it is raining, is to let it rain.
Then they repealed the law, although they knew
It would not call the dead to life again;
As school-boys, finding their mistake too late,
Draw a wet sponge across the accusing slate.

That year in Killingworth the Autumn came
Without the light of his majestic look,
The wonder of the falling tongues of flame,
The illumined pages of his Doom's-Day book.
A few lost leaves blushed crimson with their shame,
And drowned themselves despairing in the brook,

210

While the wild wind went moaning everywhere,
Lamenting the dead children of the air!

But the next Spring a stranger sight was seen,

A sight that never yet by bard was sung,
As great a wonder as it would have been

If some dumb animal had found a tongue! 220

A wagon, overarched with evergreen,

Upon whose boughs were wicker cages hung,
All full of singing birds, came down the street,
Filling the air with music wild and sweet.

From all the country round these birds were brought,

By order of the town, with anxious quest,
And, loosened from their wicker prisons, sought

In woods and fields the places they loved best,
Singing loud canticles, which many thought

Were satires to the authorities addressed, 230

While others, listening in green lanes, averred
Such lovely music never had been heard!

But blither still and louder carolled they

Upon the morrow, for they seemed to know

It was the fair Almira's wedding-day,

And everywhere, around, above, below,

When the Preceptor bore his bride away,

Their songs burst forth in joyous overflow,

And a new heaven bent over a new earth

Amid the sunny farms of Killingworth. 240

1863

THE LEGEND BEAUTIFUL

"Hadst thou stayed, I must have fled!"

That is what the Vision said.

In his chamber all alone,

Kneeling on the floor of stone,

Prayed the Monk in deep contrition

For his sins of indecision,
Prayed for greater self-denial
In temptation and in trial;
It was noonday by the dial,
And the Monk was all alone.

10

Suddenly, as if it lightened,
An unwonted splendor brightened
All within him and without him
In that narrow cell of stone;
And he saw the Blessed Vision
Of our Lord, with light Elysian
Like a vesture wrapped about him,
Like a garment round him thrown.

Not as crucified and slain,
Not in agonies of pain,
Not with bleeding hands and feet,
Did the Monk his Master see;
But as in the village street,
In the house or harvest-field,
Halt and lame and blind He healed,
When He walked in Galilee.

20

In an attitude imploring,
Hands upon his bosom crossed,
Wondering, worshipping, adoring,
Knelt the Monk in rapture lost.
Lord, he thought, in heaven that reignest,
Who am I, that thus thou deignest
To reveal thyself to me?
Who am I, that from the centre
Of thy glory thou shouldst enter
This poor cell, my guest to be?

30

Then amid his exaltation,
Loud the convent bell appalling,
From its belfry calling, calling,

Rang through court and corridor 40
With persistent iteration
He had never heard before.
It was now the appointed hour
When alike in shine or shower,
Winter's cold or summer's heat,
To the convent portals came
All the blind and halt and lame,
All the beggars of the street,
For their daily dole of food
Dealt them by the brotherhood; 50
And their almoner was he
Who upon his bended knee,
Rapt in silent ecstasy
Of divinest self-surrender,
Saw the Vision and the Splendor.
Deep distress and hesitation
Mingled with his adoration;
Should he go or should he stay?
Should he leave the poor to wait
Hungry at the convent gate, 60
Till the Vision passed away?
Should he slight his radiant guest,
Slight this visitant celestial,
For a crowd of ragged, bestial
Beggars at the convent gate?
Would the Vision there remain?
Would the Vision come again?
Then a voice within his breast
Whispered, audible and clear
As if to the outward ear: 70
"Do thy duty; that is best;
Leave unto thy Lord the rest!"

Straightway to his feet he started,
And with longing look intent
On the Blessed Vision bent,

Slowly from his cell departed,
Slowly on his errand went.

At the gate the poor were waiting,
Looking through the iron grating,
With that terror in the eye 80
That is only seen in those
Who amid their wants and woes
Hear the sound of doors that close,
And of feet that pass them by;
Grown familiar with disfavor,
Grown familiar with the savor
Of the bread by which men die!
But to-day, they knew not why,
Like the gate of Paradise
Seemed the convent gate to rise, 90
Like a sacrament divine
Seemed to them the bread and wine.
In his heart the Monk was praying,
Thinking of the homeless poor,
What they suffer and endure;
What we see not, what we see;
And the inward voice was saying:
"Whatsoever thing thou doest
To the least of mine and lowest,
That thou doest unto me!" 100

Unto me! but had the Vision
Come to him in beggar's clothing,
Come a mendicant imploring,
Would he then have knelt adoring,
Or have listened with derision,
And have turned away with loathing?

Thus his conscience put the question,
Full of troublesome suggestion,
As at length, with hurried pace,

Towards his cell he turned his face, 110
 And beheld the convent bright
 With a supernatural light,
 Like a luminous cloud expanding
 Over floor and wall and ceiling.

But he paused with awe-struck feeling
 At the threshold of his door,
 For the Vision still was standing
 As he left it there before,
 When the convent bell appalling,
 From its belfry calling, calling, 120
 Summoned him to feed the poor.
 Through the long hour intervening
 It had waited his return,
 And he felt his bosom burn,
 Comprehending all the meaning,
 When the Blessed Vision said,
 "Hadst thou stayed, I must have fled!"
 1871

THE MOTHER'S GHOST

Svend Dyring he rideth adown the glade;
I myself was young!
 There he hath wooed him so winsome a maid;
Fair words gladden so many a heart.

Together were they for seven years,
 And together children six were theirs.

Then came Death abroad through the land,
 And blighted the beautiful lily-wand.

Svend Dyring he rideth adown the glade,
 And again hath he wooed him another maid. 10

He hath wooed him a maid and brought home a bride,
But she was bitter and full of pride.

When she came driving into the yard,
There stood the six children weeping so hard.

There stood the small children with sorrowful heart;
From before her feet she thrust them apart.

She gave to them neither ale nor bread;
"Ye shall suffer hunger and hate," she said.

She took from them their quilts of blue,
And said: "Ye shall lie on the straw we strew." 20

She took from them the great waxlight:
"Now ye shall lie in the dark at night."

In the evening late they cried with cold;
The mother heard it under the mould.

The woman heard it the earth below:
"To my little children I must go."

She standeth before the Lord of all:
"And may I go to my children small?"

She prayed him so long, and would not cease,
Until he bade her depart in peace. 30

"At cock-crow thou shalt return again;
Longer thou shalt not there remain!"

She girded up her sorrowful bones,
And rifted the walls and the marble stones.

As through the village she flitted by,
The watch-dogs howled aloud to the sky.

When she came to the castle gate,
There stood her eldest daughter in wait.

“Why standest thou here, dear daughter mine?
How fares it with brothers and sisters thine?” 40

“Never art thou mother of mine,
For my mother was both fair and fine.

“My mother was white, with cheeks of red,
But thou art pale, and like to the dead.”

“How should I be fair and fine?
I have been dead; pale cheeks are mine.

“How should I be white and red,
So long, so long have I been dead?”

When she came in at the chamber door,
There stood the small children weeping sore. 50

One she braided, another she brushed,
The third she lifted, the fourth she hushed.

The fifth she took on her lap and pressed,
As if she would suckle it at her breast.

Then to her eldest daughter said she,
“Do thou bid Svend Dyring come hither to me.”

Into the chamber when he came
She spake to him in anger and shame.

“I left behind me both ale and bread;
My children hunger and are not fed. 60

“I left behind me quilts of blue;
My children lie on the straw ye strew.

"I left behind me the great waxlight;
My children lie in the dark at night.

"If I come again unto your hall,
As cruel a fate shall you befall!

"Now crows the cock with feathers red;
Back to the earth must all the dead.

"Now crows the cock with feathers swart;
The gates of heaven fly wide apart.

70

"Now crows the cock with feathers white;
I can abide no longer to-night."

Whenever they heard the watch-dogs wail,
They gave the children bread and ale.

Whenever they heard the watch-dogs bay,
They feared lest the dead were on their way.

Whenever they heard the watch-dogs bark;
I myself was young!
They feared the dead out there in the dark.
Fair words gladden so many a heart.

80

1873

HAWTHORNE

MAY 23, 1864

How beautiful it was, that one bright day
In the long week of rain!
Though all its splendor could not chase away
The omnipresent pain.

The lovely town was white with apple-blooms,
And the great elms o'erhead

Dark shadows wove on their aerial looms
Shot through with golden thread.

Across the meadows, by the gray old manse,
The historic river flowed: 10
I was as one who wanders in a trance,
Unconscious of his road.

The faces of familiar friends seemed strange;
Their voices I could hear,
And yet the words they uttered seemed to change
Their meaning to my ear.

For the one face I looked for was not there,
The one low voice was mute;
Only an unseen presence filled the air,
And baffled my pursuit. 20

Now I look back, and meadow, manse, and stream
Dimly my thought defines;
I only see—a dream within a dream—
The hill-top hearsed with pines.

I only hear above his place of rest
Their tender undertone,
The infinite longings of a troubled breast,
The voice so like his own.

There in seclusion and remote from men
The wizard hand lies cold, 30
Which at its topmost speed let fall the pen,
And left the tale half told.

Ah! who shall lift that wand of magic power,
And the lost clew regain?
The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower
Unfinished must remain!

KILLED AT THE FORD

He is dead, the beautiful youth,
The heart of honor, the tongue of truth,
He, the life and light of us all,
Whose voice was blithe as a bugle-call,
Whom all eyes followed with one consent,
The cheer of whose laugh, and whose pleasant word,
Hushed all murmurs of discontent.

Only last night, as we rode along,
Down the dark of the mountain gap,
To visit the picket-guard at the ford, 10
Little dreaming of any mishap,
He was humming the words of some old song:
"Two red roses he had on his cap,
And another he bore at the point of his sword."

Sudden and swift a whistling ball
Came out of a wood, and the voice was still;
Something I heard in the darkness fall,
And for a moment my blood grew chill;
I spake in a whisper, as he who speaks
In a room where some one is lying dead; 20
But he made no answer to what I said.

We lifted him up to his saddle again,
And through the mire and the mist and the rain
Carried him back to the silent camp,
And laid him as if asleep on his bed;
And I saw by the light of the surgeon's lamp
Two white roses upon his cheeks,
And one, just over his heart, blood-red!

And I saw in a vision how far and fleet
That fatal bullet went speeding forth, 30

Till it reached a town in the distant North,
 Till it reached a house in a sunny street,
 Till it reached a heart that ceased to beat
 Without a murmur, without a cry;
 And a bell was tolled, in that far-off town,
 For one who had passed from cross to crown,
 And the neighbors wondered that she should die.

1866

TO-MORROW

'T is late at night, and in the realm of sleep
 My little lambs are folded like the flocks;
 From room to room I hear the wakeful clocks
 Challenge the passing hour, like guards that keep
 Their solitary watch on tower and steep;
 Far off I hear the crowing of the cocks,
 And through the opening door that time unlocks
 Feel the fresh breathing of To-morrow creep.
 To-morrow! the mysterious, unknown guest,
 Who cries to me: "Remember Barmecide,
 And tremble to be happy with the rest."
 And I make answer: "I am satisfied;
 I dare not ask; I know not what is best;
 God hath already said what shall betide."

10

1866

DIVINA COMMEDIA

I

Oft have I seen at some cathedral door
 A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,
 Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
 Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
 Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;
 Far off the noises of the world retreat;
 The loud vociferations of the street
 Become an undistinguishable roar.

So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate, 10
Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

II

How strange the sculptures that adorn these towers!
This crowd of statues, in whose folded sleeves
Birds build their nests; while canopied with leaves
Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,
And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers!
But fiends and dragons on the gargoyled eaves
Watch the dead Christ between the living thieves,
And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!
Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain, 10
What exultations trampling on despair,
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of wrong,
What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,
This mediæval miracle of song!

III

I enter, and I see thee in the gloom
Of the long aisles, O poet saturnine!
And strive to make my steps keep pace with thine.
The air is filled with some unknown perfume;
The congregation of the dead make room
For thee to pass; the votive tapers shine;
Like rooks that haunt Ravenna's groves of pine
The hovering echoes fly from tomb to tomb.
From the confessionals I hear arise 10
Rehearsals of forgotten tragedies,
And lamentations from the crypts below;
And then a voice celestial, that begins
With the pathetic words, "Although your sins
As scarlet be," and ends with "as the snow."

IV

With snow-white veil and garments as of flame,
She stands before thee, who so long ago
Filled thy young heart with passion and the woe
From which thy song and all its splendors came;
And while with stern rebuke she speaks thy name,
The ice about thy heart melts as the snow
On mountain heights, and in swift overflow
Comes gushing from thy lips in sobs of shame.
Thou makest full confession; and a gleam,
As of the dawn on some dark forest cast, 10
Seems on thy lifted forehead to increase;
Lethe and Eunoë—the remembered dream
And the forgotten sorrow—bring at last
That perfect pardon which is perfect peace.

V

I lift mine eyes, and all the windows blaze
With forms of saints and holy men who died,
Here martyred and hereafter glorified;
And the great Rose upon its leaves displays
Christ's Triumph, and the angelic roundelays,
With splendor upon splendor multiplied;
And Beatrice again at Dante's side
No more rebukes, but smiles her words of praise.
And then the organ sounds, and unseen choirs 10
Sing the old Latin hymns of peace and love,
And benedictions of the Holy Ghost;
And the melodious bells among the spires
O'er all the house-tops and through heaven above
Proclaim the elevation of the Host!

VI

O star of morning and of liberty!
O bringer of the light, whose splendor shines
Above the darkness of the Apennines,
Forerunner of the day that is to be!

The voices of the city and the sea,
The voices of the mountains and the pines,
Repeat thy song, till the familiar lines
Are footpaths for the thought of Italy!
Thy fame is blown abroad from all the heights,
Through all the nations, and a sound is heard, 10
As of a mighty wind, and men devout,
Strangers of Rome, and the new proselytes,
In their own language hear thy wondrous word,
And many are amazed and many doubt.

1864-1867

A DUTCH PICTURE

Simon Danz has come home again,
From cruising about with his buccaneers;
He has singed the beard of the King of Spain,
And carried away the Dean of Jaen
And sold him in Algiers.

In his house by the Maese, with its roof of tiles,
And weathercocks flying aloft in air,
There are silver tankards of antique styles,
Plunder of convent and castle, and piles
Of carpets rich and rare. 10

In his tulip-garden there by the town,
Overlooking the sluggish stream,
With his Moorish cap and dressing-gown,
The old sea-captain, hale and brown,
Walks in a waking dream.

A smile in his gray mustachio lurks
Whenever he thinks of the King of Spain,
And the listed tulips look like Turks,
And the silent gardener as he works
Is changed to the Dean of Jaen. 20

The windmills on the outermost
Verge of the landscape in the haze,
To him are towers on the Spanish coast,
With whiskered sentinels at their post,
Though this is the river Maese.

But when the winter rains begin,
He sits and smokes by the blazing brands,
And old seafaring men come in,
Goat-bearded, gray, and with double chin,
And rings upon their hands.

30

They sit there in the shadow and shine
Of the flickering fire of the winter night;
Figures in color and design
Like those by Rembrandt of the Rhine,
Half darkness and half light.

And they talk of ventures lost or won,
And their talk is ever and ever the same,
While they drink the red wine of Tarragon,
From the cellars of some Spanish Don,
Or convent set on flame.

40

Restless at times with heavy strides
He paces his parlor to and fro;
He is like a ship that at anchor rides,
And swings with the rising and falling tides,
And tugs at her anchor-tow.

Voices mysterious far and near,
Sound of the wind and sound of the sea,
Are calling and whispering in his ear,
"Simon Danz! Why stayest thou here?
Come forth and follow me!"

50

So he thinks he shall take to the sea again
For one more cruise with his buccaneers,

To singe the beard of the King of Spain,
And capture another Dean of Jaen
And sell him in Algiers.

1876

THE HANGING OF THE CRANE

I

The lights are out, and gone are all the guests
That thronging came with merriment and jests
To celebrate the Hanging of the Crane
In the new house,—into the night are gone;
But still the fire upon the hearth burns on,
And I alone remain.

O fortunate, O happy day,
When a new household finds its place
Among the myriad homes of earth,
Like a new star just sprung to birth,
And rolled on its harmonious way
Into the boundless realms of space!

10

So said the guests in speech and song,
As in the chimney, burning bright,
We hung the iron crane to-night,
And merry was the feast and long.

II

And now I sit and muse on what may be,
And in my vision see, or seem to see,
Through floating vapors interfused with light,
Shapes indeterminate, that gleam and fade,
As shadows passing into deeper shade
Sink and elude the sight.

20

For two alone, there in the hall,
Is spread the table round and small;

Upon the polished silver shine
 The evening lamps, but, more divine,
 The light of love shines over all;
 Of love, that says not mine and thine,
 But ours, for ours is thine and mine.

They want no guests, to come between 30
 Their tender glances like a screen,
 And tell them tales of land and sea,
 And whatsoever may betide
 The great, forgotten world outside;
 They want no guests; they needs must be
 Each other's own best company.

III

The picture fades; as at a village fair
 A showman's views, dissolving into air,
 Again appear transfigured on the screen,
 So in my fancy this; and now once more, 40
 In part transfigured, through the open door
 Appears the selfsame scene.

Seated, I see the two again,
 But not alone; they entertain
 A little angel unaware,
 With face as round as is the moon;
 A royal guest with flaxen hair,
 Who, throned upon his lofty chair,
 Drums on the table with his spoon,
 Then drops it careless on the floor, 50
 To grasp at things unseen before.

Are these celestial manners? these
 The ways that win, the arts that please?
 Ah yes; consider well the guest,
 And whatsoe'er he does seems best;
 He ruleth by the right divine

Of helplessness, so lately born
In purple chambers of the morn,
As sovereign over thee and thine.
He speaketh not; and yet there lies 60
A conversation in his eyes;
The golden silence of the Greek,
The gravest wisdom of the wise,
Not spoken in language, but in looks
More legible than printed books,
As if he could but would not speak.
And now, O monarch absolute,
Thy power is put to proof; for, lo!
Resistless, fathomless, and slow,
The nurse comes rustling like the sea, 70
And pushes back thy chair and thee,
And so good night to King Canute.

IV

As one who walking in a forest sees
A lovely landscape through the parted trees,
Then sees it not, for boughs that intervene;
Or as we see the moon sometimes revealed
Through drifting clouds, and then again concealed,
So I behold the scene.

There are two guests at table now;
The king, deposed and older grown, 80
No longer occupies the throne,—
The crown is on his sister's brow;
A Princess from the Fairy Isles,
The very pattern girl of girls,
All covered and embowered in culls,
Rose-tinted from the Isle of Flowers,
And sailing with soft, silken sails
From far-off Dreamland into ours.
Above their bowls with rims of blue
Four azure eyes of deeper hue 90

Are looking, dreamy with delight;
 Limpid as planets that emerge
 Above the ocean's rounded verge,
 Soft-shining through the summer night.
 Steadfast they gaze, yet nothing see
 Beyond the horizon of their bowls;
 Nor care they for the world that rolls
 With all its freight of troubled souls
 Into the days that are to be.

V

Again the tossing boughs shut out the scene, 100
 Again the drifting vapors intervene,
 And the moon's pallid disk is hidden quite;
 And now I see the table wider grown,
 As round a pebble into water thrown
 Dilates a ring of light.

I see the table wider grown,
 I see it garlanded with guests,
 As if fair Ariadne's Crown
 Out of the sky had fallen down;
 Maidens within whose tender breasts 110
 A thousand restless hopes and fears,
 Forth reaching to the coming years,
 Flutter awhile, then quiet lie,
 Like timid birds that fain would fly,
 But do not dare to leave their nests;—
 And youths, who in their strength elate
 Challenge the van and front of fate,
 Eager as champions to be
 In the divine knight-errantry
 Of youth, that travels sea and land 120
 Seeking adventures, or pursues,
 Through cities, and through solitudes
 Frequented by the lyric Muse,
 The phantom with the beckoning hand,

That still allures and still eludes.
O sweet illusions of the brain!
O sudden thrills of fire and frost!
The world is bright while ye remain,
And dark and dead when ye are lost!

VI

The meadow-brook, that seemeth to stand still, 130
Quickens its current as it nears the mill;
And so the stream of Time that lingereth
In level places, and so dull appears,
Runs with a swifter current as it nears
The gloomy mills of Death.

And now, like the magician's scroll,
That in the owner's keeping shrinks
With every wish he speaks or thinks,
Till the last wish consumes the whole,
The table dwindles, and again 140
I see the two alone remain.
The crown of stars is broken in parts;
Its jewels, brighter than the day,
Have one by one been stolen away
To shine in other homes and hearts.
One is a wanderer now afar
In Ceylon or in Zanzibar,
Or sunny regions of Cathay;
And one is in the boisterous camp
Mid clink of arms and horses' tramp, 150
And battle's terrible array.
I see the patient mother read,
With aching heart, of wrecks that float
Disabled on those seas remote,
Or of some great heroic deed
On battle-fields, where thousands bleed
To lift one hero into fame.
Anxious she bends her graceful head

Above these chronicles of pain,
And trembles with a secret dread 160
Lest there among the drowned or slain
She find the one belovèd name.

VII

After a day of cloud and wind and rain
Sometimes the setting sun breaks out again,
And, touching all the darksome woods with light,
Smiles on the fields until they laugh and sing,
Then like a ruby from the horizon's ring
Drops down into the night.

What see I now? The night is fair,
The storm of grief, the clouds of care, 170
The wind, the rain, have passed away;
The lamps are lit, the fires burn bright,
The house is full of life and light;
It is the Golden Wedding day.
The guests come thronging in once more,
Quick footsteps sound along the floor,
The trooping children crowd the stair,
And in and out and everywhere
Flashes along the corridor
The sunshine of their golden hair. 180
On the round table in the hall
Another Ariadne's Crown
Out of the sky hath fallen down;
More than one Monarch of the Moon
Is drumming with his silver spoon;
The light of love shines over all.

O fortunate, O happy day!
The people sing, the people say.
The ancient bridegroom and the bride,
Smiling contented and serene 190
Upon the blithe, bewildering scene,

Behold, well pleased, on every side
Their forms and features multiplied,
As the reflection of a light
Between two burnished mirrors gleams,
Or lamps upon a bridge at night
Stretch on and on before the sight,
Till the long vista endless seems.

1874

MORITURI SALUTAMUS

POEM FOR THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CLASS OF 1825
IN BOWDOIN COLLEGE

Tempora labuntur, tacitisque senescimus annis,
Et fugiunt freno non remorante dies.

OVID, *Fastorum*, Lib. vi.

"O Cæsar, we who are about to die
Salute you!" was the gladiators' cry
In the arena, standing face to face
With death and with the Roman populace.

O ye familiar scenes,—ye groves of pine,
That once were mine and are no longer mine,—
Thou river, widening through the meadows green
To the vast sea, so near and yet unseen,—
Ye halls, in whose seclusion and repose
Phantoms of fame, like exhalations, rose
And vanished,—we who are about to die
Salute you; earth and air and sea and sky,
And the Imperial Sun that scatters down
His sovereign splendors upon grove and town.

10

Ye do not answer us! ye do not hear!
We are forgotten; and in your austere
And calm indifference, ye little care
Whether we come or go, or whence or where.
What passing generations fill these halls,

What passing voices echo from these walls, 20
Ye heed not; we are only as the blast,
A moment heard, and then forever past.

Not so the teachers who in earlier days
Led our bewildered feet through learning's maze;
They answer us—alas! what have I said?
What greetings come there from the voiceless dead?
What salutation, welcome, or reply?
What pressure from the hands that lifeless lie?
They are no longer here; they all are gone
Into the land of shadows,—all save one. 30
Honor and reverence, and the good repute
That follows faithful service as its fruit,
Be unto him, whom living we salute.

The great Italian poet, when he made
His dreadful journey to the realms of shade,
Met there the old instructor of his youth,
And cried in tones of pity and of ruth:
“Oh, never from the memory of my heart
Your dear, paternal image shall depart,
Who while on earth, ere yet by death surprised, 40
Taught me how mortals are immortalized;
How grateful am I for that patient care
All my life long my language shall declare.”

To-day we make the poet's words our own,
And utter them in plaintive undertone;
Nor to the living only be they said,
But to the other living called the dead,
Whose dear, paternal images appear
Not wrapped in gloom, but robed in sunshine here;
Whose simple lives, complete and without flaw, 50
Were part and parcel of great Nature's law;
Who said not to their Lord, as if afraid,
“Here is thy talent in a napkin laid,”
But labored in their sphere, as men who live

In the delight that work alone can give.
Peace be to them; eternal peace and rest,
And the fulfilment of the great behest:
"Ye have been faithful over a few things,
Over ten cities shall ye reign as kings."

And ye who fill the places we once filled, 60
And follow in the furrows that we tilled,
Young men, whose generous hearts are beating high,
We who are old, and are about to die,
Salute you; hail you; take your hands in ours,
And crown you with our welcome as with flowers!

How beautiful is youth! how bright it gleams
With its illusions, aspirations, dreams!
Book of Beginnings, Story without End,
Each maid a heroine, and each man a friend!
Aladdin's Lamp, and Fortunatus' Purse, 70
That holds the treasures of the universe!
All possibilities are in its hands,
No danger daunts it, and no foe withstands;
In its sublime audacity of faith,
"Be thou removed!" it to the mountain saith,
And with ambitious feet, secure and proud,
Ascends the ladder leaning on the cloud!

As ancient Priam at the Scæan gate
Sat on the walls of Troy in regal state
With the old men, too old and weak to fight, 80
Chirping like grasshoppers in their delight
To see the embattled hosts, with spear and shield,
Of Trojans and Achæians in the field;
So from the snowy summits of our years
We see you in the plain, as each appears,
And question of you; asking, "Who is he
That towers above the others? Which may be
Atreides, Menelaus, Odysseus,
Ajax the great, or bold Idomeneus?"

Let him not boast who puts his armor on 90
As he who puts it off, the battle done.
Study yourselves; and most of all note well
Wherein kind Nature meant you to excel.
Not every blossom ripens into fruit;
Minerva, the inventress of the flute,
Flung it aside, when she her face surveyed
Distorted in a fountain as she played;
The unlucky Marsyas found it, and his fate
Was one to make the bravest hesitate.

Write on your doors the saying wise and old, 100
"Be bold! be bold!" and everywhere, "Be bold;
Be not too bold!" Yet better the excess
Than the defect; better the more than less;
Better like Hector in the field to die,
Than like a perfumed Paris turn and fly.

And now, my classmates; ye remaining few
That number not the half of those we knew,
Ye, against whose familiar names not yet
The fatal asterisk of death is set,
Ye I salute! The horologe of Time 110
Strikes the half-century with a solemn chime,
And summons us together once again,
The joy of meeting not unmixed with pain.

Where are the others? Voices from the deep
Caverns of darkness answer me: "They sleep!"
I name no names; instinctively I feel
Each at some well-remembered grave will kneel,
And from the inscription wipe the weeds and moss,
For every heart best knoweth its own loss.
I see their scattered gravestones gleaming white 120
Through the pale dusk of the impending night;
O'er all alike the impartial sunset throws
Its golden lilies mingled with the rose;

We give to each a tender thought, and pass
Out of the graveyards with their tangled grass,
Unto these scenes frequented by our feet
When we were young, and life was fresh and sweet.

What shall I say to you? What can I say
Better than silence is? When I survey
This throng of faces turned to meet my own, 130
Friendly and fair, and yet to me unknown,
Transformed the very landscape seems to be;
It is the same, yet not the same to me.
So many memories crowd upon my brain,
So many ghosts are in the wooded plain,
I fain would steal away, with noiseless tread,
As from a house where some one lieth dead.
I cannot go;—I pause;—I hesitate;
My feet reluctant linger at the gate;
As one who struggles in a troubled dream 140
To speak and cannot, to myself I seem.

Vanish the dream! Vanish the idle fears!
Vanish the rolling mists of fifty years!
Whatever time or space may intervene,
I will not be a stranger in this scene.
Here every doubt, all indecision, ends;
Hail, my companions, comrades, classmates, friends!

Ah me! the fifty years since last we met
Seem to me fifty folios bound and set
By Time, the great transcriber, on his shelves, 150
Wherein are written the histories of ourselves.
What tragedies, what comedies, are there;
What joy and grief, what rapture and despair!
What chronicles of triumph and defeat,
Of struggle, and temptation, and retreat!
What records of regrets, and doubts, and fears!
What pages blotted, blistered by our tears!

What lovely landscapes on the margin shine,
What sweet, angelic faces, what divine
And holy images of love and trust, 160
Undimmed by age, unsoiled by damp or dust!

Whose hand shall dare to open and explore
These volumes, closed and clasped forevermore?
Not mine. With reverential feet I pass;
I hear a voice that cries, "Alas! alas!
Whatever hath been written shall remain,
Nor be erased nor written o'er again;
The unwritten only still belongs to thee:
Take heed, and ponder well what that shall be."

As children frightened by a thunder-cloud 170
Are reassured if some one reads aloud
A tale of wonder, with enchantment fraught,
Or wild adventure, that diverts their thought,
Let me endeavor with a tale to chase
The gathering shadows of the time and place,
And banish what we all too deeply feel
Wholly to say, or wholly to conceal.

In mediæval Rome, I know not where,
There stood an image with its arm in air,
And on its lifted finger, shining clear, 180
A golden ring with the device, "Strike here!"
Greatly the people wondered, though none guessed
The meaning that these words but half expressed,
Until a learned clerk, who at noonday
With downcast eyes was passing on his way,
Paused, and observed the spot, and marked it well,
Whereon the shadow of the finger fell;
And, coming back at midnight, delved, and found
A secret stairway leading underground.
Down this he passed into a spacious hall, 190
Lit by a flaming jewel on the wall;

And opposite, in threatening attitude,
With bow and shaft a brazen statue stood.
Upon its forehead, like a coronet,
Were these mysterious words of menace set:
"That which I am, I am; my fatal aim
None can escape, not even yon luminous flame!"

Midway the hall was a fair table placed,
With cloth of gold, and golden cups enchased
With rubies, and the plates and knives were gold, 200
And gold the bread and viands manifold.
Around it, silent, motionless, and sad,
Were seated gallant knights in armor clad,
And ladies beautiful with plume and zone,
But they were stone, their hearts within were stone;
And the vast hall was filled in every part
With silent crowds, stony in face and heart.

Long at the scene, bewildered and amazed,
The trembling clerk in speechless wonder gazed;
Then from the table, by his greed made bold, 210
He seized a goblet and a knife of gold,
And suddenly from their seats the guests upsprang,
The vaulted ceiling with loud clamors rang,
The archer sped his arrow, at their call,
Shattering the lambent jewel on the wall,
And all was dark around and overhead;—
Stark on the floor the luckless clerk lay dead!

The writer of this legend then records
Its ghostly application in these words:
The image is the Adversary old, 220
Whose beckoning finger points to realms of gold;
Our lusts and passions are the downward stair
That leads the soul from a diviner air;
The archer, Death; the flaming jewel, Life;
Terrestrial goods, the goblet and the knife;

The knights and ladies, all whose flesh and bone
By avarice have been hardened into stone;
The clerk, the scholar whom the love of pelf
Tempt from his books and from his nobler self.

The scholar and the world! The endless strife, 230
The discord in the harmonies of life!
The love of learning, the sequestered nooks,
And all the sweet serenity of books;
The market-place, the eager love of gain,
Whose aim is vanity, and whose end is pain!

But why, you ask me, should this tale be told
To men grown old, or who are growing old?
It is too late! Ah, nothing is too late
Till the tired heart shall cease to palpitate.
Cato learned Greek at eighty; Sophocles 240
Wrote his grand *Œdipus*, and Simonides
Bore off the prize of verse from his compeers,
When each had numbered more than fourscore years,
And Theophrastus, at fourscore and ten,
Had but begun his *Characters of Men*.
Chaucer, at Woodstock with the nightingales,
At sixty wrote the *Canterbury Tales*;
Goethe at Weimar, toiling to the last,
Completed *Faust* when eighty years were past.
These are indeed exceptions; but they show 250
How far the gulf-stream of our youth may flow
Into the arctic regions of our lives,
Where little else than life itself survives.

As the barometer foretells the storm
While still the skies are clear, the weather warm,
So something in us, as old age draws near,
Betrays the pressure of the atmosphere.
The nimble mercury, ere we are aware,
Descends the elastic ladder of the air;

Three Friends of Mine

The telltale blood in artery and vein
Sinks from its higher levels in the brain;
Whatever poet, orator, or sage
May say of it, old age is still old age.
It is the waning, not the crescent moon;
The dusk of evening, not the blaze of noon;
It is not strength, but weakness; not desire,
But its surcease; not the fierce heat of fire,
The burning and consuming element,
But that of ashes and of embers spent,
In which some living sparks we still discern,
Enough to warm, but not enough to burn.

What then? Shall we sit idly down and say
The night hath come; it is no longer day?
The night hath not yet come; we are not quite
Cut off from labor by the failing light;
Something remains for us to do or dare;
Even the oldest tree some fruit may bear;
Not ~~Æ~~Edipus Coloneus, or Greek Ode,
Or tales of pilgrims that one morning rode
Out of the gateway of the Tabard Inn, 280
But other something, would we but begin;
For age is opportunity no less
Than youth itself, though in another dress,
And as the evening twilight fades away
The sky is filled with stars, invisible by day. 1875

THREE FRIENDS OF MINE

I

When I remember them, those friends of mine,
Who are no longer here, the noble three,
Who half my life were more than friends to me,
And whose discourse was like a generous wine,
I most of all remember the divine
Something, that shone in them, and made us see

The archetypal man, and what might be
The amplitude of Nature's first design.
In vain I stretch my hands to clasp their hands;
I cannot find them. Nothing now is left 10
But a majestic memory. They meanwhile
Wander together in Elysian lands,
Perchance remembering me, who am bereft
Of their dear presence, and, remembering, smile.

II

In Attica thy birthplace should have been,
Or the Ionian Isles, or where the seas
Encircle in their arms the Cyclades,
So wholly Greek wast thou in thy serene
And childlike joy of life, O Philhellene!
Around thee would have swarmed the Attic bees;
Homer had been thy friend, or Socrates,
And Plato welcomed thee to his demesne.
For thee old legends breathed historic breath;
Thou sawest Poseidon in the purple sea, 10
And in the sunset Jason's fleece of gold!
Oh, what hadst thou to do with cruel Death,
Who wast so full of life, or Death with thee,
That thou shouldst die before thou hadst grown old!

III

I stand again on the familiar shore,
And hear the waves of the distracted sea
Piteously calling and lamenting thee,
And waiting restless at thy cottage door.
The rocks, the sea-weed on the ocean floor,
The willows in the meadow, and the free
Wild winds of the Atlantic welcome me;
Then why shouldst thou be dead, and come no more?
Ah, why shouldst thou be dead, when common men
Are busy with their trivial affairs, 10
Having and holding? Why, when thou hadst read

Nature's mysterious manuscript, and then
Wast ready to reveal the truth it bears,
Why art thou silent? Why shouldst thou be dead?

IV

River that stealest with such silent pace
Around the City of the Dead, where lies
A friend who bore thy name, and whom these eyes
Shall see no more in his accustomed place,
Linger and fold him in thy soft embrace,
And say good night, for now the western skies
Are red with sunset, and gray mists arise
Like damps that gather on a dead man's face.
Good night! good night! as we so oft have said
Beneath this roof at midnight, in the days 10
That are no more, and shall no more return.
Thou hast but taken thy lamp and gone to bed;
I stay a little longer, as one stays
To cover up the embers that still burn.

V

The doors are all wide open; at the gate
'The blossomed lilacs counterfeit a blaze,
And seem to warm the air; a dreamy haze
Hangs o'er the Brighton meadows like a fate,
And on their margin, with sea-tides elate,
The flooded Charles, as in the happier days,
Writes the last letter of his name, and stays
His restless steps, as if compelled to wait.
I also wait; but they will come no more,
Those friends of mine, whose presence satisfied 10
The thirst and hunger of my heart. Ah me!
They have forgotten the pathway to my door!
Something is gone from nature since they died,
And summer is not summer, nor can be.

CHAUCER

An old man in a lodge within a park;
 The chamber walls depicted all around
 With portraitures of huntsman, hawk, and hound,
 And the hurt deer. He listeneth to the lark,
 Whose song comes with the sunshine through the dark
 Of painted glass in leaden lattice bound;
 He listeneth and he laugheth at the sound,
 Then writeth in a book like any clerk.
 He is the poet of the dawn, who wrote
 The Canterbury Tales, and his old age
 Made beautiful with song; and as I read
 I hear the crowing cock, I hear the note
 Of lark and linnet, and from every page
 Rise odors of ploughed field or flowery mead.

10

1875

SHAKESPEARE

A vision as of crowded city streets,
 With human life in endless overflow;
 Thunder of thoroughfares; trumpets that blow
 To battle; clamor, in obscure retreats,
 Of sailors landed from their anchored fleets;
 Tolling of bells in turrets, and below
 Voices of children, and bright flowers that throw
 O'er garden-walls their intermingled sweets!
 This vision comes to me when I unfold
 The volume of the Poet paramount,
 Whom all the Muses loved, not one alone;—
 Into his hands they put the lyre of gold,
 And, crowned with sacred laurel at their fount,
 Placed him as Musagetes on their throne.

10

1875

MILTON

I pace the sounding sea-beach and behold
 How the voluminous billows roll and run,
 Upheaving and subsiding, while the sun
 Shines through their sheeted emerald far unrolled,
 And the ninth wave, slow gathering fold by fold
 All its loose-flowing garments into one,
 Plunges upon the shore, and floods the dun
 Pale reach of sands, and changes them to gold.

So in majestic cadence rise and fall

The mighty undulations of thy song,

10

O sightless bard, England's Mæonides!

And ever and anon, high over all

Uplifted, a ninth wave superb and strong,

Floods all the soul with its melodious seas.

1875

KEATS

The young Endymion sleeps Endymion's sleep;
 The shepherd-boy whose tale was left half told!

The solemn grove uplifts its shield of gold

To the red rising moon, and loud and deep

The nightingale is singing from the steep;

It is midsummer, but the air is cold;

Can it be death? Alas, beside the fold

A shepherd's pipe lies shattered near his sheep.

Lo! in the moonlight gleams a marble white,

On which I read: "Here lieth one whose name

10

Was writ in water." And was this the meed

Of his sweet singing? Rather let me write:

"The smoking flax before it burst to flame

Was quenched by death, and broken the bruised reed."

1875

IN THE CHURCHYARD AT TARRYTOWN

Here lies the gentle humorist, who died
 In the bright Indian Summer of his fame!
 A simple stone, with but a date and name,
 Marks his secluded resting-place beside
 The river that he loved and glorified.
 Here in the autumn of his days he came,
 But the dry leaves of life were all aflame
 With tints that brightened and were multiplied.
 How sweet a life was his; how sweet a death!
 Living, to wing with mirth the weary hours, 10
 Or with romantic tales the heart to cheer;
 Dying, to leave a memory like the breath
 Of summers full of sunshine and of showers,
 A grief and gladness in the atmosphere.

1877

NATURE

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,
 Leads by the hand her little child to bed,
 Half willing, half reluctant to be led,
 And leave his broken playthings on the floor,
 Still gazing at them through the open door,
 Nor wholly reassured and comforted
 By promises of others in their stead,
 Which, though more splendid, may not please him more;
 So Nature deals with us, and takes away
 Our playthings one by one, and by the hand 10
 Leads us to rest so gently, that we go
 Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,
 Being too full of sleep to understand
 How far the unknown transcends the what we know.

1877

SLEEP

Lull me to sleep, ye winds, whose fitful sound
Seems from some faint Æolian harpstring caught;
Seal up the hundred wakeful eyes of thought
As Hermes with his lyre in sleep profound
The hundred wakeful eyes of Argus bound;
For I am weary, and am overwrought
With too much toil, with too much care distraught,
And with the iron crown of anguish crowned.
Lay thy soft hand upon my brow and cheek,
O peaceful Sleep! until from pain released 10
I breathe again uninterrupted breath!
Ah, with what subtle meaning did the Greek
Call thee the lesser mystery at the feast
Whereof the greater mystery is death!
1875

THE SOUND OF THE SEA

The sea awoke at midnight from its sleep,
And round the pebbly beaches far and wide
I heard the first wave of the rising tide
Rush onward with uninterrupted sweep;
A voice out of the silence of the deep,
A sound mysteriously multiplied
As of a cataract from the mountain's side,
Or roar of winds upon a wooded steep.
So comes to us at times, from the unknown
And inaccessible solitudes of being, 10
The rushing of the sea-tides of the soul;
And inspirations, that we deem our own,
Are some divine foreshadowing and foreseeing
Of things beyond our reason or control.
1875

A NAMELESS GRAVE

"A soldier of the Union mustered out,"
 Is the inscription on an unknown grave
 At Newport News, beside the salt-sea wave,
 Nameless and dateless; sentinel or scout
 Shot down in skirmish, or disastrous rout
 Of battle, when the loud artillery drave
 Its iron wedges through the ranks of brave
 And doomed battalions, storming the redoubt.
 Thou unknown hero sleeping by the sea
 In thy forgotten grave! with secret shame 10
 I feel my pulses beat, my forehead burn,
 When I remember thou hast given for me
 All that thou hadst, thy life, thy very name,
 And I can give thee nothing in return.

1874

COPLAS DE MANRIQUE

FROM THE SPANISH

Oh, let the soul her slumbers break,
 Let thought be quickened, and awake;
 Awake to see
 How soon this life is past and gone,
 And death comes softly stealing on,
 How silently!

Swiftly our pleasures glide away,
 Our hearts recall the distant day
 With many sighs;
 The moments that are speeding fast 10
 We heed not, but the past,—the past,
 More highly prize.

Onward its course the present keeps,
 Onward the constant current sweeps,

Till life is done;
And, did we judge of time aright,
The past and future in their flight
Would be as one.

Let no one fondly dream again,
That Hope and all her shadowy train
Will not decay;
Fleeting as were the dreams of old,
Remembered like a tale that's told,
They pass away.

20

Our lives are rivers, gliding free
To that unfathomed, boundless sea,
The silent grave!
Thither all earthly pomp and boast
Roll, to be swallowed up and lost
In one dark wave.

30

Thither the mighty torrents stray,
Thither the brook pursues its way,
And tinkling rill.
There all are equal; side by side
The poor man and the son of pride
Lie calm and still.

I will not here invoke the throng
Of orators and sons of song,
The deathless few;
Fiction entices and deceives,
And, sprinkled o'er her fragrant leaves,
Lies poisonous dew.

40

To One alone my thoughts arise,
The Eternal Truth, the Good and Wise,
To Him I cry,
Who shared on earth our common lot,

But the world comprehended not
His deity.

This world is but the rugged road
Which leads us to the bright abode
Of peace above; 50
So let us choose that narrow way,
Which leads no traveller's foot astray
From realms of love.

Our cradle is the starting-place,
Life is the running of the race,
We reach the goal
When, in the mansions of the blest,
Death leaves to its eternal rest
The weary soul. 60

Did we but use it as we ought,
This world would school each wandering thought
To its high state.
Faith wings the soul beyond the sky,
Up to that better world on high,
For which we wait.

Yes, the glad messenger of love,
To guide us to our home above,
The Saviour came;
Born amid mortal cares and fears. 70
He suffered in this vale of tears
A death of shame.

Behold of what delusive worth
The bubbles we pursue on earth,
The shapes we chase
Amid a world of treachery!
They vanish ere death shuts the eye,
And leave no trace.

Time steals them from us, chances strange,
Disastrous accident, and change,
That come to all;
Even in the most exalted state,
Relentless sweeps the stroke of fate;
The strongest fall.

80

Tell me, the charms that lovers seek
In the clear eye and blushing cheek,
The hues that play
O'er rosy lip and brow of snow,
When hoary age approaches slow,
Ah, where are they?

90

The cunning skill, the curious arts,
The glorious strength that youth imparts
In life's first stage;
These shall become a heavy weight,
When Time swings wide his outward gate
To weary age.

The noble blood of Gothic name,
Heroes emblazoned high to fame,
In long array;
How, in the onward course of time,
The landmarks of that race sublime
Were swept away!

100

Some, the degraded slaves of lust,
Prostrate and trampled in the dust,
Shall rise no more;
Others, by guilt and crime, maintain
The scutcheon, that, without a stain,
Their fathers bore.

Wealth and the high estate of pride,
With what untimely speed they glide,

110

How soon depart!
Bid not the shadowy phantoms stay,
The vassals of a mistress they,
Of fickle heart.

These gifts in Fortune's hands are found;
Her swift revolving wheel turns round,
And they are gone!
No rest the inconstant goddess knows,
But changing, and without repose,
Still hurries on.

120

Even could the hand of avarice save
Its gilded baubles, till the grave
Reclaimed its prey,
Let none on such poor hopes rely;
Life, like an empty dream, flits by,
And where are they?

Earthly desires and sensual lust
Are passions springing from the dust,
They fade and die;
But, in the life beyond the tomb,
They seal the immortal spirit's doom
Eternally!

130

The pleasures and delights, which mask
In treacherous smiles life's serious task,
What are they all
But the fleet coursers of the chase,
And death an ambush in the race,
Wherein we fall?

No foe, no dangerous pass, we heed,
Brook no delay, but onward speed
With loosened rein;
And, when the fatal snare is near,

140

We strive to check our mad career,
But strive in vain.

Could we new charms to age impart,
And fashion with a cunning art
The human face,
As we can clothe the soul with light,
And make the glorious spirit bright
With heavenly grace,

150

How busily each passing hour
Should we exert that magic power!
What ardor show,
To deck the sensual slave of sin,
Yet leave the freeborn soul within,
In weeds of woe!

Monarchs, the powerful and the strong,
Famous in history and in song
Of olden time,
Saw, by the stern decrees of fate,
Their kingdoms lost, and desolate
Their race sublime.

160

Who is the champion? who the strong?
Pontiff and priest, and sceptred throng?
On these shall fall
As heavily the hand of Death,
As when it stays the shepherd's breath
Beside his stall.

I speak not of the Trojan name,
Neither its glory nor its shame
Has met our eyes;
Nor of Rome's great and glorious dead,
Though we have heard so oft, and read,
Their histories.

170

Little avails it now to know
Of ages passed so long ago,
Nor how they rolled;
Our theme shall be of yesterday,
Which to oblivion sweeps away,
Like days of old.

180

Where is the King, Don Juan? Where
Each royal prince and noble heir
Of Aragon?
Where are the courtly gallantries?
The deeds of love and high emprise,
In battle done?

Tourney and joust, that charmed the eye,
And scarf, and gorgeous panoply,
And nodding plume,
What were they but a pageant scene?
What but the garlands, gay and green,
That deck the tomb?

190

Where are the high-born dames, and where
Their gay attire, and jewelled hair,
And odors sweet?
Where are the gentle knights, that came
To kneel, and breathe love's ardent flame,
Low at their feet?

Where is the song of Troubadour?
Where are the lute and gay tambour
They loved of yore?
Where is the mazy dance of old,
The flowing robes, inwrought with gold,
The dancers wore?

200

And he who next the sceptre swayed,
Henry, whose royal court displayed

Such power and pride;
Oh, in what winning smiles arrayed,
The world its various pleasures laid
His throne beside!

210

But Oh, how false and full of guile
That world, which wore so soft a smile
But to betray!
She, that had been his friend before,
Now from the fated monarch tore
Her charms away.

The countless gifts, the stately walls,
The royal palaces, and halls,
All filled with gold;
Plate with armorial bearings wrought,
Chambers with ample treasures fraught
Of wealth untold;

220

The noble steeds, and harness bright,
And gallant lord, and stalwart knight,
In rich array,
Where shall we seek them now? Alas!
Like the bright dewdrops on the grass,
They passed away.

His brother, too, whose factious zeal
Usurped the sceptre of Castile,
Unskilled to reign;
What a gay, brilliant court had he,
When all the flower of chivalry
Was in his train!

230

But he was mortal; and the breath
That flamed from the hot forge of Death
Blasted his years;
Judgment of God! that flame by thee,

When raging fierce and fearfully,
Was quenched in tears! 240

Spain's haughty Constable, the true
And gallant Master, whom we knew
Most loved of all;
Breathe not a whisper of his pride,
He on the gloomy scaffold died,
Ignoble fall!

The countless treasures of his care,
His villages and villas fair,
His mighty power,
What were they all but grief and shame, 250
Tears and a broken heart, when came
The parting hour?

His other brothers, proud and high,
Masters, who, in prosperity,
Might rival kings;
Who made the bravest and the best
The bondsmen of their high behest,
Their underlings;

What was their prosperous estate,
When high exalted and elate 260
With power and pride?
What, but a transient gleam of light,
A flame, which, glaring at its height,
Grew dim and died?

So many a duke of royal name,
Marquis and count of spotless fame,
And baron brave,
That might the sword of empire wield,
All these, O Death, hast thou concealed
In the dark grave! 270

Their deeds of mercy and of arms,
In peaceful days, or war's alarms,
When thou dost show,
O Death, thy stern and angry face,
One stroke of thy all-powerful mace
Can overthrow.

Unnumbered hosts, that threaten nigh,
Pennon and standard flaunting high,
And flag displayed;
High battlements intrenched around,
Bastion, and moated wall, and mound,
And palisade,

280

And covered trench, secure and deep,
All these cannot one victim keep,
O Death, from thee,
When thou dost battle in thy wrath,
And thy strong shafts pursue their path
Unerringly.

O World! so few the years we live,
Would that the life which thou dost give
Were life indeed!
Alas! thy sorrows fall so fast,
Our happiest hour is when at last
The soul is freed.

290

Our days are covered o'er with grief,
And sorrows neither few nor brief
Veil all in gloom;
Left desolate of real good,
Within this cheerless solitude
No pleasures bloom.

300

Thy pilgrimage begins in tears,
And ends in bitter doubts and fears,

Or dark despair;
Midway so many toils appear,
That he who lingers longest here
Knows most of care.

Thy goods are bought with many a groan,
By the hot sweat of toil alone,
And weary hearts;
Fleet-footed is the approach of woe, 310
But with a lingering step and slow
Its form departs.

And he, the good man's shield and shade,
To whom all hearts their homage paid,
As Virtue's son,
Roderic Manrique, he whose name
Is written on the scroll of Fame,
Spain's champion;

His signal deeds and prowess high
Demand no pompous eulogy, 320
Ye saw his deeds!
Why should their praise in verse be sung?
The name, that dwells on every tongue,
No minstrel needs.

To friends a friend; how kind to all
The vassals of this ancient hall
And feudal fief!
To foes how stern a foe was he!
And to the valiant and the free
How brave a chief! 330

What prudence with the old and wise;
What grace in youthful gayeties;
In all how sage!
Benignant to the serf and slave,

He showed the base and falsely brave
A lion's rage.

His was Octavian's prosperous star,
The rush of Cæsar's conquering car
At battle's call;
His, Scipio's virtue; his, the skill
And the indomitable will
Of Hannibal.

340

His was a Trajan's goodness, his
A Titus' noble charities
And righteous laws;
The arm of Hector, and the might
Of Tully, to maintain the right
In truth's just cause;

The clemency of Antonine,
Aurelius' countenance divine,
Firm, gentle, still;
The eloquence of Adrian,
And Theodosius' love to man,
And generous will;

350

In tented field and bloody fray,
An Alexander's vigorous sway
And stern command;
The faith of Constantine; ay, more,
The fervent love Camillus bore
His native land.

360

He left no well-filled treasury,
He heaped no pile of riches high,
Nor massive plate;
He fought the Moors, and, in their fall,
City and tower and castled wall
Were his estate.

Upon the hard-fought battle-ground,
Brave steeds and gallant riders found
A common grave;
And there the warrior's hand did gain 370
The rents, and the long vassal train,
That conquest gave.

And if of old his halls displayed
The honored and exalted grade
His worth had gained,
So, in the dark, disastrous hour,
Brothers and bondsmen of his power
His hand sustained.

After high deeds, not left untold,
In the stern warfare which of old 380
'T was his to share,
Such noble leagues he made that more
And fairer regions than before
His guerdon were.

These are the records, half effaced,
Which, with the hand of youth, he traced
On history's page;
But with fresh victories he drew
Each fading character anew
In his old age. 390

By his unrivalled skill, by great
And veteran service to the state,
By worth adored,
He stood, in his high dignity,
The proudest knight of chivalry,
Knight of the Sword.

He found his cities and domains
Beneath a tyrant's galling chains

And cruel power;
But, by fierce battle and blockade,
Soon his own banner was displayed
From every tower.

400

By the tried valor of his hand,
His monarch and his native land
Were nobly served;
Let Portugal repeat the story,
And proud Castile, who shared the glory
His arms deserved.

And when so oft, for weal or woe,
His life upon the fatal throw
Had been cast down;
When he had served, with patriot zeal,
Beneath the banner of Castile,
His sovereign's crown;

410

And done such deeds of valor strong,
That neither history nor song
Can count them all;
Then, on Ocaña's castled rock,
Death at his portal came to knock,
With sudden call,

420

Saying, "Good Cavalier, prepare
To leave this world of toil and care
With joyful mien;
Let thy strong heart of steel this day
Put on its armor for the fray,
The closing scene.

"Since thou hast been, in battle-strife,
So prodigal of health and life,
For earthly fame,
Let virtue nerve thy heart again;

430

Loud on the last stern battle-plain
They call thy name.

"Think not the struggle that draws near
Too terrible for man, nor fear
To meet the foe;
Nor let thy noble spirit grieve,
Its life of glorious fame to leave
On earth below.

"A life of honor and of worth
Has no eternity on earth, 440
'T is but a name;
And yet its glory far exceeds
That base and sensual life, which leads
To want and shame.

"The eternal life, beyond the sky,
Wealth cannot purchase, nor the high
And proud estate;
The soul in dalliance laid, the spirit
Corrupt with sin, shall not inherit
A joy so great. 450

"But the good monk, in cloistered cell,
Shall gain it by his book and bell,
His prayers and tears;
And the brave knight, whose arm endures
Fierce battle, and against the Moors
His standard rears.

"And thou, brave knight, whose hand has poured
The life-blood of the Pagan horde
O'er all the land,
In heaven shalt thou receive, at length, 460
The guerdon of thine earthly strength
And dauntless hand.

“Cheered onward by this promise sure,
Strong in the faith entire and pure
Thou dost profess,
Depart, thy hope is certainty,
The third, the better life on high
Shalt thou possess.”

“O Death, no more, no more delay;
My spirit longs to flee away,
And be at rest;
The will of Heaven my will shall be,
I bow to the divine decree,
To God’s behest.

470

“My soul is ready to depart,
No thought rebels, the obedient heart
Breathes forth no sigh;
The wish on earth to linger still
Were vain, when ’t is God’s sovereign will
That we shall die.

480

“O thou, that for our sins didst take
A human form, and humbly make
Thy home on earth;
Thou, that to thy divinity
A human nature didst ally
By mortal birth,

“And in that form didst suffer here
Torment, and agony, and fear,
So patiently;
By thy redeeming grace alone,
And not for merits of my own,
Oh, pardon me!”

490

As thus the dying warrior prayed,
Without one gathering mist or shade

Upon his mind;
 Encircled by his family,
 Watched by affection's gentle eye
 So soft and kind;

His soul to Him who gave it rose;
 God lead it to its long repose, 500
 Its glorious rest!
 And, though the warrior's sun has set,
 Its light shall linger round us yet,
 Bright, radiant, blest.

1833

THE CROSS OF SNOW

In the long, sleepless watches of the night,
 A gentle face—the face of one long dead—
 Looks at me from the wall, where round its head
 The night-lamp casts a halo of pale light.

Here in this room she died; and soul more white
 Never through martyrdom of fire was led
 To its repose; nor can in books be read
 The legend of a life more benedight.

There is a mountain in the distant West
 That, sun-defying, in its deep ravines 10
 Displays a cross of snow upon its side.

Such is the cross I wear upon my breast
 These eighteen years, through all the changing scenes
 And seasons, changeless since the day she died.

(*Written July 10, 1879*) 1886

THE TIDE RISES, THE TIDE FALLS

The tide rises, the tide falls,
 The twilight darkens, the curlew calls;
 Along the sea-sands damp and brown
 The traveller hastens toward the town,
 And the tide rises, the tide falls.

Darkness settles on roofs and walls,
But the sea, the sea in the darkness calls;
The little waves, with their soft, white hands,
Efface the footprints in the sands,
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

10

The morning breaks; the steeds in their stalls
Stamp and neigh, as the hostler calls;
The day returns, but nevermore
Returns the traveller to the shore,
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

1880

JUGURTHA

How cold are thy baths, Apollo!
Cried the African monarch, the splendid,
As down to his death in the hollow
Dark dungeons of Rome he descended,
Uncrowned, unthroned, unattended;
How cold are thy baths, Apollo!

How cold are thy baths, Apollo!
Cried the Poet, unknown, unbefriended,
As the vision, that lured him to follow,
With the mist and the darkness blended,
And the dream of his life was ended;
How cold are thy baths, Apollo!

10

1880

L'ENVOI

THE POET AND HIS SONGS

As the birds come in the Spring,
We know not from where;
As the stars come at evening
From depths of the air;

As the rain comes from the cloud,
And the brook from the ground;
As suddenly, low or loud,
Out of silence a sound;

As the grape comes to the vine,
The fruit to the tree;
As the wind comes to the pine,
And the tide to the sea;

10

As come the white sails of ships
O'er the ocean's verge;
As comes the smile to the lips,
The foam to the surge;

So come to the Poet his songs,
All hitherward blown
From the misty realm, that belongs
To the vast Unknown.

20

His, and not his, are the lays
He sings; and their fame
Is his, and not his; and the praise
And the pride of a name.

For voices pursue him by day,
And haunt him by night,
And he listens, and needs must obey,
When the Angel says, "Write!"

1880

NOTES

Prelude

This is the first poem in *Voices of the Night*, Longfellow's first book of original verse, which appeared in 1839. It is remarkable not only for the beauty of its versification and for the accuracy with which it phrases the mood of dreamy youth in the presence of wild Nature, but also for the poet's dedication of himself—in the last five stanzas—to the sterner tasks of poetry, which in fact he never undertook.

l. 5, *sheen*: here used as an adjective with the sense of "shining" or "bright."

l. 43, *Pentecost*: the seventh Sunday after Easter. Whitsunday.

l. 46, *bishop's-caps*: also called miterwort.

l. 109: almost *verbatim* from the first sonnet of Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*.

Hymn to the Night

"No poem," said Poe, "ever opened with a beauty more august." The Greek motto, from the *Iliad*, means "Welcome! Thrice prayed for!"

l. 21, *Orestes*: the Greek hero who was pursued by the Furies after slaying his mother.

A Psalm of Life

This most famous of Longfellow's shorter poems was written on July 26, 1838. The poet later said of it: "I kept it some time in manuscript, unwilling to show it to any one, it being a voice from my inmost heart at a time when I was rallying from depression." This inward voice borrowed the figure of the muffled drum from Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Humorous Lieutenant*. Across the manuscript of the second paragraph of *Hyperion* Longfellow wrote the words, "Psalms of Life and Death," and the inference is natural that the "depression" he refers to was connected with the death of his first wife. See C. L. Johnson, *Harvard Studies and Notes*, XIV, 249.

The poem was published anonymously, in the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, and was immediately popular. Whittier said of it: "These nine simple verses are worth more than all the dreams of Shelley, and Keats, and Wordsworth. They are alive and vigorous with the spirit of the day in which we live,—the moral steam-enginery of an age of action."

In the word "Psalmist" of the sub-title the poet apparently refers to himself in his darker mood.

l. 30, *Sailing*: it is not clear how the footprints on the sand could be seen from the deck of a vessel at sea.

Footsteps of Angels

l. 13, *He*: George W. Pierce, the poet's close friend and brother-in-law, who died, in 1835, at about the same time as Longfellow's first wife.

l. 21, *Being Beauteous*: the first Mrs. Longfellow.

The Beleaguered City

In a footnote to Scott's *Border Minstrelsy* Longfellow found the words: "Similar to this was the *Nacht Lager*, or midnight camp, which seemed nightly to beleaguer the walls of Prague, but which disappeared at the recitation of the magical words, *Vezelé, Vezelé, ho! ho! ho!*" The poet's free handling of this suggestion is characteristic.

Burial of the Minnisink

Written when Longfellow was eighteen, this poem shows that his interest in the American Indian began early. He was by no means the first American poet to handle such themes. Compare Freneau's "The Indian Burying Ground," Whittier's "Pentucket," and Bryant's "Monument Mountain."

The Skeleton in Armor

"This ballad was suggested to me," Longfellow writes, "while riding on the seashore at Newport. A year or two previous a skeleton had been dug up at Fall River, clad in broken and corroded armor; and the idea occurred to me of connecting it with the Round Tower at Newport, generally known hitherto as the Old Windmill, though now claimed by the Danes as a work of their early ancestors."

l. 19, *Skald*: Scandinavian poet.

l. 109, *flaw*: a sudden gust of wind.

l. 110, *Skaw*: a low cape of land.

l. 134, *tower*: really a windmill, at Newport, Rhode Island.

l. 159, *skool*: a Scandinavian salutation in drinking healths.

The Wreck of the Hesperus

On December 17, 1839, Longfellow wrote in his Journal: "News of shipwrecks horrible on the coast. Twenty bodies washed ashore near Gloucester, one lashed to a piece of wreck. There is a reef called Norman's Woe where many of these took place; among others the schooner *Hesperus*. Also the *Sea-flower* on Black Rock. I must write a ballad on this." Thirteen days later he wrote: "I sat till twelve o'clock by my fire, smoking, when suddenly it came into my head to write *The Ballad of the Schooner Hesperus*; which I accordingly did. . . . It hardly cost me an effort." The style of the Popular Ballads is more closely imitated here than in "The Skeleton in Armor," which, however, Longfellow called one of his "national ballads." The speed of the story, the vigor of the metaphors, and the easy, strong movement of the lines all suggest such originals

as "Sir Patrick Spens," which the poet follows particularly in the fourth and fifth stanzas. See "The Real Wreck of the Hesperus," by Henry Beston, *Bookman* (New York), May, 1925.

The Village Blacksmith

The smithy here described stood on Brattle Street in Cambridge, not far from Longfellow's home, and the blacksmith's house is still standing. The horse-chestnut tree that shaded it was felled in 1876, against the poet's protest, and on his seventy-second birthday the schoolchildren of Cambridge gave him an arm-chair made from its wood.

l. 7, *long*: A Cambridge barber told Longfellow that crisp hair is never long, so that the poet gave his printer directions to change the word to "strong." Eventually he returned to what he had first written.

l. 8, *tan*: bark used for tanning hides.

Excelsior

This poem was suggested by the motto on the shield of New York State, which Longfellow happened to see in a newspaper. The poem was written on a letter-envelope, and the original MS. is dated "September 28, 1841. Half-past three o'clock, morning." As Poe says, "It depicts the earnest upward impulse of the soul,—an impulse not to be subdued even in death."

We should expect in the title the comparative adverb *excelsius* rather than the adjective.

The Slave's Dream

Written in 1842, on a voyage home from Europe, at the request of Charles Sumner, Longfellow's *Poems on Slavery* were not among his best performances. In extenuation of their pallid sentimentality it is well to remember that very few persons of Longfellow's position were at this time Abolitionists.

The Warning

The last of the *Poems on Slavery*.

Carillon

Longfellow's delight in the sound of bells is shown also in "The Bells of Lynn," "The Bell of Atri," the Prologue to *The Golden Legend*, Part II, and in his last poem, "The Bells of San Blas," written a few days before his death. The visit to Bruges commemorated in this and the following poem was paid on May 30 and 31, 1842. See the *Journal* for these dates.

The Belfry of Bruges

l. 19, *Foresters*: the title of the early Flemish governors, such as those named in the words that follow.

l. 22, *Fleece of Gold*: an order founded in 1430 by Philippe de Bourgogne.

l. 25, *Maximilian*: Son of Frederick III. He was imprisoned by the people of Bruges and released only on condition that he swear, while kneeling in the public square, not to take vengeance.

l. 26, *Mary*: Marie de Valois, Countess of Flanders and wife of Arch-duke Maximilian.

l. 30, *battle of the Spurs of Gold*: Fought in 1302. An overwhelming victory of the Flemish over the French.

l. 31, *Minnewater*: a fight between the people of Bruges and those of Ghent.

The Arsenal at Springfield

Suggested by Mrs. Longfellow to her husband during a visit paid to the Arsenal, on their wedding journey, in company with Sumner, in 1843.

l. 19, *teocallis*: Mexican temples.

Nuremberg

Longfellow's characteristic pleasure in this quaint German town is expressed in his letter to Freiligrath written from the town on September 24, 1842. The poem was composed two years later.

The Bridge

In a Journal entry of March 15, 1838, Longfellow speaks of his walks from Boston to Cambridge, saying: "I always stop on the bridge; tide-waters are beautiful." This poem was written seven years later, after his second marriage had cured the loneliness which he here calls "care."

The Day Is Done

Written to serve as a proem to a volume, edited by Longfellow, called *The Waif*, in which the work of minor poets was represented.

The Old Clock on the Stairs

The French motto: "Eternity is a clock the pendulum of which says over and again without ceasing these two words alone in the silence of the grave:—'Ever! Never! Never! Ever!'"

l. 2, *country-seat*: the homestead, in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, of Mrs. Longfellow's maternal grandfather.

The Arrow and the Song

On November 16, 1845, Longfellow wrote in his Journal: "Before Church wrote *The Arrow and the Song*, which came into my mind as I stood with my back to the fire, and glanced on to the paper with arrowy speed. Literally an improvisation." The poem is related, however, to a

quatrain of Goethe's in his *Sprüche in Reimen*. For a much more interesting possibility, see W. B. Yeats's *Autobiographies*, II, 6, and notes.

Mezzo Cammin

Written in Germany, during an enforced vacation taken by the poet to regain his health. The word "care" in this poem, as in "The Bridge," apparently refers to the poet's sorrow for the death of his first wife.

Evangeline

The story told in this poem was offered by a Boston clergyman to Hawthorne, and by him to Longfellow, who accepted it immediately. Whittier was making a study of the Acadians at the same time with a view to writing a poem about them, but he abandoned the plan when he heard of Longfellow's work. The poet never saw either Nova Scotia or the Mississippi. For his knowledge of the former and of the historical expulsion of the Acadians he depended chiefly upon *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia*, by T. C. Haliburton, author of *Sam Slick the Clock-Maker*. A "diorama" of the Mississippi, shown in Boston in 1846, gave him assistance for the later scenes. He seems also to have drawn suggestions for atmosphere from Fremont's *Expedition to the Rocky Mountains* and from the writings of Chateaubriand about America. Probably the most important single influence upon the poem, however, is that of Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*. Here Longfellow found the model not only for his hexameter verse but for the mingling of rural simplicity with a natural refinement.

When *Evangeline* appeared in 1847 it was greeted both at home and abroad as the long-sought indigenous American poem.

Nova Scotia, often called Acadia or Acadie, was ceded by France to Great Britain in 1713. When the French and Indian War broke out, the old French inhabitants refused to take the oath of allegiance, and accordingly some 3000 of them were deported in the autumn of 1755. See *The History of Grand-Pré*, by J. F. Herbin, St. John, N. B.

l. 20, *Basin of Minas*: the eastern arm of the Bay of Fundy.

l. 21, *Grand-Pré*: Great Meadow.

l. 144, *Saint Eulalie*: her saint's day is February 12.

l. 159, *All-Saints*: the day referred to is November 1.

l. 170, *Persian*: Xerxes. See Herodotus VII, 31.

l. 249, *Louisburg*: a fortified place in Nova Scotia, like the others mentioned in this line.

l. 280, *Loup-garou*: were-wolf.

l. 432, *You*: in the following speech Longfellow follows the original proclamation, as given in Haliburton, as closely as the verse will permit.

l. 621, *gleeds*: coals.

l. 705, *Coueurs-des-Bois*: French-Canadian hunters and trappers.

l. 741, *River*: the Ohio.

l. 750, *Acadian coast*: so-called because so many of the Acadians settled there.

l. 750, *Opelousas*: in southern Louisiana.

l. 764, *Golden Coast*: the banks of the river above Baton Rouge.

l. 807, *Atchafalaya*: an outlet of the Red River.

l. 952, *Adayes*: in northern Texas.

l. 957, *red*: because the sun shines through it.

l. 1044, *Upharsin*: See Daniel 5: 5, 25.

l. 1095, *Ishmael's children*: Indians. So called because, like Ishmael, they "dwelt in the wilderness."

l. 1106, *land*: apparently the Rocky Mountains. Gabriel has struck westward toward them from the Ozarks.

l. 1109, *Followed*: the following lines appear to be related in some way to Emerson's poem, "Forerunners," published the year before *Evangeline* appeared.

l. 1114, *Fata Morgana*: a mirage.

l. 1298, *pestilence*: yellow fever was epidemic in Philadelphia in 1793.

l. 1308, *almshouse*: Longfellow had seen this building twenty years before he wrote *Evangeline*.

l. 1328, *Wicaco*: the Swedish settlement in this place, near Philadelphia, had been made before the coming of Penn.

The Building of the Ship

This poem, which stands to American literature as Schiller's "Song of the Bell" does to German, shows, like the later "Kéramos," the poet's interest in handicraft, and particularly in the craft of ship-building, with which he had been familiar since his boyhood.

l. 223, *Behold*: Longfellow points out in a note that the launching of ships fully sparred and rigged is not impossible, though it is unusual.

l. 377 ff.: These final lines of the poem, which alone have made it memorable, were written to take the place of an earlier and much inferior conclusion. It was immediately recognized that they had a definite bearing upon the danger in which the Union stood, even twelve years before the Civil War. They were read in Boston by the great actress, Fanny Kemble, shortly after publication, and swept through the country. In a paper published in *Scribner's Monthly*, August, 1879, Noah Brooks relates that he once recited the poem to Abraham Lincoln in the White House. "As he listened to the last lines his eyes filled with tears, and his cheeks were wet. He did not speak for some minutes, but finally said, with simplicity: 'It is a wonderful gift to be able to stir men like that.'"

Seaweed

In versification, verbal music, and imagery, the first four stanzas of this poem are among the finest things of Longfellow's accomplishment. To the taste of our day the final stanzas are worse than valueless. Longfellow's homiletic method is clearly illustrated here.

The Secret of the Sea

l. 11, *Arnaldos*: Longfellow seems not to have used the original of this ballad but the translation in Lockhart's *Ancient Spanish Ballads*, Edinburgh, 1843, p. 172 ff.

King Witlaf's Drinking-Horn

On September 30, 1848, Longfellow wrote in his *Journal*: "Worked upon *Kavanagh* all the morning; and wound up with *King Witlaf's Drinking-Horn*, which I painted with a sweep of the pencil just before dinner."

The description of the horn, and also of the bells mentioned in the seventh stanza, must have been found in S. R. Maitland's *The Dark Ages*, London, 1844, p. 241 ff. Longfellow, however, invented the incident of the Abbot's death.

Gaspar Becerra

The story is taken from William Stirling-Maxwell's *Annals of the Artists of Spain*, London, 1848, p. 241.

The thought expressed in the last stanza may have some bearing upon the question of the poet's "Americanism."

The Song of Hiawatha

"This Indian Edda—if I may so call it—is founded on a tradition, prevalent among the North American Indians, of a personage of miraculous birth who was sent among them to clear their rivers, forests, and fishing-grounds, and to teach them the arts of peace. . . . Mr. Schoolcraft gives an account of him in his *Algic Researches* . . . and in his *History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States* . . . may be found the Iroquois form of the tradition, derived from the verbal narrative of an Onondaga chief.

"Into this old tradition I have woven other curious Indian legends, drawn chiefly from the various and valuable writings of Mr. Schoolcraft. . . . The scene of the poem is among the Ojibways on the southern shore of Lake Superior, in the region between the Pictured Rocks and the Grand Sable." (Longfellow's note.)

Longfellow had been planning for many years to write an epic based upon the Indian legends. At last he discovered what seemed to him a suitable meter—the unrhymed trochaic tetrameter of the Finnish epic, *Kalevala*, which he had read more than a decade before with his friend, Freiligrath, in Germany. He began to write the poem in June, 1854, worked at it with more pleasure and confidence than he did upon almost any other poem, and completed it in nine months. The entire poem is in twenty-two parts, with an Introduction.

(Introduction)

l. 41, *vale of Tawasentha*: Now called Norman's Kill, in Albany County, New York.

(The Peace-Pipe)

l. 1, *Prairie*: The source of this passage is George Catlin's *Letters on the Manners . . . of the North American Indians*, London, 1841, II, 160.

(The Four Winds)

l. 1, *Mudjekeewis*: the west wind—or, at times, the Father of the Winds.

l. 34, *Great Bear of the mountains*: Longfellow took the legend of the Great Bear from Heckewelder's accounts in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, I, 240 ff., and IV, 260.

The Courtship of Miles Standish

Written at the height of the poet's powers, when he was just fifty years old, with more humor and a lighter tone of feeling than he shows elsewhere, this poem has been popular with all classes of readers from the day of its appearance in 1858. Longfellow is writing here of his own people—he was a descendant of Alden and Priscilla—and of customs and beliefs with which he had always been familiar. It is characteristic of him that he had never seen Plymouth when he set to work, but he knew the Massachusetts coast. The characterization, though simple, is firm and adequate; the story moves at a steady pace; the hexameter line is managed with a skill greater than Longfellow had previously shown in it.

The History of Plymouth Plantation, by Governor William Bradford, published in the year before Longfellow set to work although it had been in manuscript for two centuries, was the poet's principal source of information. He also used Belknap's *American Biography*, C. W. Elliott's *History of New England*, Young's *Chronicles of the Pilgrims*, Banvard's *Plymouth and the Pilgrims*, Drake's *Nooks and Corners of the New England Coast*, and the writings of John Eliot, Apostle to the Indians. Oral tradition provided some details, such as those relating to Priscilla's arch reply to Alden.

l. 20, *Youngest of all*: Alden had signed with the company as a cooper.

l. 25, *sword*: still preserved at Pilgrim Hall, Plymouth. Longfellow first saw it long after writing the poem.

l. 86, *Priscilla*: daughter of William Mullins, who died, together with his wife and son and servant, during the first winter.

l. 210, *Mayflowers*: trailing arbutus.

l. 547, *Stephen and Richard and Gilbert*: Stephen Hopkins, Richard Warren, and Gilbert Winslow, all actual Pilgrims.

l. 725 ff: *Old South Leaflets* No. 175 contains a speech by Charles Francis Adams in which Longfellow's swift and vivid passage is unfavorably compared with the original story told by Bradford. See Adams's *Three Episodes of Massachusetts History*.

l. 939, *custom of Holland*: Bradford's account reads: "May 12 was the first marriage in this place, which, according to the laudable custom of

the Low-Countries . . . was thought most requisite to be performed by the magistrate."

The Warden of the Cinque Ports

Written on the 14th of October, 1852, in honor of the Duke of Wellington, who had died just a month before. As the Atlantic Cable was not yet in operation and the voyage from England still usually took a month, Longfellow probably wrote his poem as soon as he heard the news.

The Lord Wardenship of the five seaport towns named in l. 9 was once a position of great power and responsibility, but by the time Wellington held it the position involved little more than an honorary title. Longfellow's selection of this one from among the hundreds of titles borne by Wellington was perhaps due to his love of the sea. It seems likely, also, that some of the imagery is drawn from recollections of the sea-fight off Portland commemorated in "My Lost Youth."

My Lost Youth

With the exception of some of his sonnets and, possibly, of "The Fire of Driftwood," this is probably the most beautiful of Longfellow's shorter poems. For a fully informed account of its origin and a reproduction of the original manuscript, see the article, "Longfellow's Lapland Song," by Professor James Taft Hatfield, in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, XLV, 1188 ff.

l. 37, *sea-fight*: an engagement between the American brig *Enterprise* and the English brig *Boxer* which took place off Portland in 1813. Longfellow was present at the funeral of the two captains.

The Jewish Cemetery at Newport

On the 9th of July, 1852, Longfellow wrote in his Journal: "Went this morning into the Jewish burying ground at Newport. There are few graves; nearly all are low tombstones of marble, with Hebrew inscriptions, and a few words added in English or Portuguese. . . . It is a shady nook at the corner of two dusty frequented streets." The poem resulting from this visit is written in the difficult stanza of Gray's "Elegy" and in the mood of that poem. Comparison will show that Longfellow is as much superior to Gray in thought-structure and "sense of the whole" as he is inferior in vividness and intensity of phrase and image.

Catawba Wine

Longfellow stands alone among earlier American poets as a connoisseur in wines. His friend Nicholas Longworth of Cincinnati had developed the Catawba grape—so-called because it was first found by the river of that name in the Carolinas—to the point where it was useful in wine-making, and had sent a case of the wine to the poet. The versified reply is of course little more than a *jeu d'esprit*.

l. 8, *Scuppernong*: a cultivated variety of the fox-grape.

l. 21, *Beautiful River*: the word "Ohio" has this meaning in the local Indian languages.

l. 32, *Verzenay*: a white still wine from the district of Champagne. *Sillery* is—or was—a sparkling wine from the same region.

Sandalphon

The poet's Journal for November 2, 1857, has this note: "In the evening Scherb read to me some curious Talmudic legends from Corrodi's *Chiliasmus*,—of the great angel Sandalphon, and the feast of the Leviathan; at which feast this great fish is to be served up."

An interesting and instructive comparison might be made between this poem and Poe's "Israfel."

The Children's Hour

l. 27, *Bishop of Bingen*: a legendary Bishop Hatto II, supposed to have been devoured by rats and mice for his cruelty to his people. His "Mouse-Tower" on the Rhine still stands.

l. 31, *mustache*: old soldier.

Paul Revere's Ride

This vivid story stands first in the *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, published in three parts from 1863 to 1874. The tales are fitted together in a framework not unlike that of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, for they are supposed to be told by a group of friends—a landlord, a student, a Sicilian, a Spanish Jew, a theologian, a poet, and a musician—meeting at the Red Horse Tavern in Sudbury, some twenty miles from Cambridge. The tavern still stands and has recently been restored to the condition in which Longfellow knew it by Mr. Henry Ford. The present tale is told by the landlord, who represents the actual innkeeper of Longfellow's time, Lyman Howe.

The account upon which the poet chiefly depended seems to have been Revere's own narrative, which may be seen in the *Massachusetts Historical Society's Collections*, First Series, V. The poem has aroused much controversy regarding the details of what actually happened. See *Memorial History of Boston*, III, 101.

l. 6, *friend*: Richard Devens.

l. 43, *hill*: probably the reference is to the Copp's Hill Burying Ground, not far from the Old North Church, though not "beneath" it.

l. 100, *upon*: the "Battle of Lexington" occurred on the following day.

l. 102, *town*: Revere himself did not reach Concord, having been taken by a group of British soldiers. According to his own account the alarm was carried to Concord by a Dr. Prescott, who had overtaken him in Lexington.

The Saga of King Olaf

This loosely joined sequence of "lyrics," as Longfellow called them, is given to the musician (Ole Bull, the Scandinavian violinist) in *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, Part I. For all but the first and last poems, which are original and were not written at the same time as the others, Longfellow's source, rather closely followed, was Samuel Laing's translation of Snorre Sturleson, which appeared in 1844 as *The Heimskringla, or Chronicle of the Kings of Norway*. The poet, however, was able to read the original Icelandic, and apparently did so. (See the *Journal* for November 2, 1860.) Each of the poems was composed in a single day. In several of them Longfellow shows a vigor and speed with which he is seldom credited.

The Birds of Killingworth

Against his usual custom, Longfellow invented most of this tale, which stands last in the first series of the *Tales of a Wayside Inn* and is supposed to be told by the poet. The village of Killingworth, in southeastern Connecticut, did actually have such a custom of bird-slaughter, for a few years, as is here described; but the characters depicted in the poem appear to be imaginary. Emerson thought this tale "serene, happy, and immortal as Chaucer."

Longfellow's knowledge of birds was very slight as compared with that of his friend and neighbor, James Russell Lowell. In justice to him we should remember that ornithology was not in his time a popular study, and also that his eyesight was not good. He had read far more about birds than he had seen or heard of them. Thus, in the second line, although "merle" and "mavis" may stand for blackbird and thrush, they are English names for English birds.

l. 4, *King*: referring to a passage in the "Caedmonian Genesis," an Anglo-Saxon version of the Book of Genesis now no longer attributed to the poet Caedmon.

l. 12, *mentioned*: in Matthew 10: 29.

l. 17, *Sound*: of Long Island.

l. 30, *Cassandra*: a daughter of King Priam, gifted with prophecy, but at the same time cursed by Apollo with the fate of never being believed.

l. 52, *Will*: *Treatise on the Freedom of the Will*, by Jonathan Edwards, one of the most important books in American Colonial literature. It is characteristic of Longfellow, who probably never read it, that he should speak of it lightly.

l. 57, *Academy*: shows closer knowledge than is usually suspected. The Academy existed, as described.

l. 143, *field-fares*: the name of a European thrush, never domesticated in America.

l. 184, *Bartholomew*: referring to the massacre of French Protestants in Paris on the Eve of St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24, 1572.

The Legend Beautiful

Told by the theologian (Professor Daniel Treadwell) in *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, Part II, this story was taken from Jeremy Taylor's *History of . . . Christ*, I, 5. Longfellow may have known one or more of the earlier versions that carry the legend back to the sixth century. In all of these sources, however, the monk is drawn from his vision only by the chapel bell ringing for prayers, which he obeys merely as a matter of habit. By making his hero an almoner the poet has greatly improved the legend, so that it represents the struggle between the contemplative and the active aspects of the religious life. The implication that these apparently conflicting claims may be harmonized in a single act is characteristic of Longfellow's own religious thought.

Hawthorne

Longfellow had known Hawthorne only slightly while the two were students together at Bowdoin College, but in later life their acquaintance warmed into friendship.

l. 5, *town*: Concord, Massachusetts.

l. 8, *thread*: this effect has been caught most perfectly in Bliss Carman's poem about Concord called "In Gold Lacquer."

l. 9, *manse*: once the home of Hawthorne, and the scene of the introduction to his *Mosses from an Old Manse*.

l. 10, *river*: "historic" because of Concord Fight. This took place at a bridge not far from the rocky hill, shaded by pines, where Hawthorne, Emerson, Thoreau, and Alcott are buried.

l. 32, *half told*: Hawthorne left several unfinished manuscripts, but the reference is, probably, to that of *Septimius Felton*.

Killed at the Ford

In a letter of March 23, 1866, Longfellow says that this poem does not refer to any particular event or person. His own son, Charles, a lieutenant in the Army of the Potomac, was very severely wounded in the war, but recovered. Longfellow's journey to Washington to meet his wounded son is narrated with a quiet self-control which suggests that his entire *Journal* is to be read as the record of a mind and heart that "never spoke out."

To-Morrow

l. 10, *Barmecide*: See the story of "The Barber's Sixth Brother" in *The Arabian Nights*.

Divina Commedia

These six sonnets were written to accompany Longfellow's translation of Dante's poem, upon which he worked, at intervals, from 1843 to 1867, concentrating upon it nearly all his attention after the death of his wife in

1861. In the completed form of his translation a sonnet precedes and follows each of the three divisions. Each is subtly related to the position for which it is designed, in a manner not entirely different from Dante's own. Considered as a unit, the group stands high in Longfellow's work, revealing a depth and strength attributable to his bereavement and to the constant association with a supreme mind.

The Hanging of the Crane

This poem seems to have grown out of a conversation with Thomas Bailey Aldrich when he was setting up housekeeping in Boston in 1867. It was first published seven years later in the *New York Ledger*, and the poet was paid for it the sum of three thousand dollars.

l. 3, *Crane*: an arm of iron fastened to the brick of a fire-place so as to be movable horizontally, for use in the suspension of pots and kettles over the fire.

l. 62, *golden silence of the Greek*: probably a reference to Pythagoras, who enjoined silence upon his pupils.

l. 72, *Canute*: a reference to the legend concerning this king's attempt to stay the tides.

Morituri Salutamus

Longfellow's poem written for the fiftieth anniversary of his college class is by many considered his noblest utterance. The title, which means "We who are about to die salute [thee]," was suggested to him by a painting, by Gerome, of gladiators in the Roman arena. The quotation from Ovid means: "Time slips by, we age with the silent years, and the days race unchecked."

l. 30, *one*: Professor A. S. Packard.

l. 36, *instructor*: Brunetto Latini. See Dante's *Inferno* XV, 82-87.

l. 78, *Priam*: *Iliad*, III, 199.

l. 90, *Let him not boast*: from I Kings 20: 11.

l. 101, *Be bold*: The saying is found in several forms, and perhaps derives from Plutarch's Life of Demosthenes; but Longfellow probably had in mind Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, III, 2, 54.

l. 109, *asterisk*: in the records of Bowdoin College.

l. 247, *At sixty*: This was written when it was still thought that Chaucer was born in 1320. Later scholarship has fixed upon 1340 as a somewhat arbitrary date. Chaucer was probably about forty-five when he began his *Canterbury Tales*.

Three Friends of Mine.

In the second of these sonnets Longfellow commemorates C. C. Felton, once professor of Greek at Harvard and president for the last two years of his life; the third is written in memory of Louis Agassiz; the fourth deals

with the poet's dearest friend, Charles Sumner. The last of these died in 1874, the year before the sonnets were written, and was buried at Mount Auburn, beside the Charles, where Agassiz, Lowell, Holmes, Prescott, Motley, Parkman, and Longfellow lie also.

Keats

1. 10, *Here lieth*: the epitaph on Keats's gravestone, chosen by himself.

In the Churchyard at Tarrytown

1. 1, *humorist*: used in a sense now nearly lost, the word refers to Washington Irving.

Sleep

1. 12, *subtle meaning*: the idea is commonplace in ancient Greek literature, but much was made of it by Iamblichus.

A Nameless Grave

A description of the graveyard at Newport News, appearing in a Boston newspaper, was sent to Longfellow in 1864. The sonnet was written ten years later.

An interesting comparison may be made between this poem and Whitman's "As Toilsome I Wander'd Virginia's Woods."

Coplas de Manrique

Longfellow's translation of the *Coplas*, or stanzas, of Don Jorge Manrique—a Spanish soldier-poet who died in battle in 1479—is given here as a favorable example of a kind of writing at which he worked happily and well throughout his career. This translation, published in 1833 together with the original text, was his first book of verse. In a prefatory note he asserted that "the great art of translating well lies in the power of rendering literally the words of a foreign author while at the same time we preserve the spirit of the original." Concerning translation in general Longfellow wrote to Freiligrath, on November 24, 1843, that "it is like running a ploughshare through the soil of one's mind; a thousand germs of thought start up (excuse this agricultural figure) which otherwise might have lain and rotted in the ground. Still, it sometimes seems to me like an excuse for being lazy—like leaning on another man's shoulder."

The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls

For bare strength and stark simplicity, as well as for the suggestion of time's relentless stride, this utterance of an old man takes a high place in our literature.

Jugurtha

According to Plutarch, what the Numidian king Jugurtha actually said, when thrust by Marius into the dungeon, was "By Hercules! your bath is cold." Longfellow has deliberately changed the phrasing in order to suit the context of his second stanza. In this poem, written near the end of his life, the poet attains that effect of magic which is lacking in almost all the verse of his earlier years.

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